



Children, Young People & Education Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 23 July 2024
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Wallasey Town Hall – Committee Room One

Contact Officer: Bryn Griffiths
Tel: 0151 691 8117
e-mail: bryngriffiths@wirral.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

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This meeting will be [webcast](#)

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held 06 March 2024.

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Public Questions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon on 18 July 2024 to the Council's Monitoring Officer via this link: [Public Question Form](#) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link: [Document Data Protection Protocol for Public Speakers at Committees | Wirral Council](#)

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question by the deadline for submission.

Statements and Petitions

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Thursday 18 July 2024, to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1.

Petitions may be presented to the Committee no later than 12 noon on Thursday 18 July 2024. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding one minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. Please give notice of petitions to committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Questions by Members

Questions by Members to dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - DECISIONS

- 6. PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM EDUCATION KEY STAGE 4 (Pages 9 - 16)**
- 7. CHESHIRE & MERSEY LEARNING DISABILITY & AUTISM HOUSING STRATEGY (Pages 17 - 88)**

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SECTION B - BUDGET REPORTS

- 8. 2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 4 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT (Pages 89 - 98)**
- 9. BUDGET MONITORING AND BUDGET SETTING PROCESSES (Pages 99 - 126)**
- 10. 2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (THE PERIOD TO 30 JUNE 2024) (Pages 127 - 140)**

SECTION C - PERFORMANCE REPORTS

- 11. CHILDREN'S SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 2023/24 (Pages 141 - 156)**

SECTION D - REVIEWS/ REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

- 12. EARLY YEARS QUALITY AND SUFFICIENCY (Pages 157 - 168)**
- 13. APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2024/25 (Pages 169 - 180)**
- 14. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 181 - 190)**

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this committee can be found at the end of this agenda.

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Present: Councillor S Powell-Wilde (Chair)

Councillors P Basnett C Povall
S Bennett V Wilson
T Laing C Cooke
L Luxon-Kewley J Grier
K Hodson C Carubia

14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting as well as those watching the webcast and reminded them that a copy of the webcast would be retained on the Council's website for two years.

15 APOLOGIES

The Chair informed the committee that no apologies had been received.

16 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interests in connections with any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Councillor Paula Basnett and the Chair both declared a personal interest as foster carers.

17 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

18 PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The Chair noted that no public questions, statements, or petitions had been received.

19 EARLY YEARS FUNDING ENTITLEMENT AGREEMENT

The Early Years Operations Manager presented a report on behalf of the Director for Children, Families and Education which noted that the Early Years Funding Entitlement (EYFE) agreement was an annual agreement between Wirral Council and early years providers to deliver funded places to children under 5 years. The agreement was based on a template provided by the Department for Education and the template had been tailored for Wirral which included additional sections that supported relevant strategies such as attendance and summative assessment data.

The funding agreement covered the delivery of EYFE for children aged from nine months to five years, including Early Years Pupil Premium, Disability Access Fund and Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF). SENIF also had a guidance booklet. The funding agreement had been reviewed and updated for financial year 2024-2025 and early years providers had been consulted with the draft document for the previous three months.

Members sought clarity on how children might be considered to have witnessed abuse and who made that determination. They were informed that the Police looked at each case to determine if it met their referral threshold.

Members queried whether schools had capacity for provision and asked how parents were being communicated with and what would happen if funding could not be secured. They were informed that schools had been consulted and discussions had with headteachers in order to address capacity issues. It was noted that Wirral's marketing team had been promoting the service alongside a national campaign as well as further work with partners to engage with parents. Funding for provision had been secured in every case so far and the Department for Education supported funding for this.

Members queried if spaces for care would be given priority for non-working parents and whether working parents would be penalised. It was noted that the intake of children was not controlled by who received benefits or not but that the Council would push for equity in this matter with providers.

Resolved – That the draft copy of the Early Years Funding Entitlement agreement for financial year 2024/25 be approved.

20 2023-24 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER THREE

The Finance Manager presented a report on behalf of the Director of Finance which set out the financial monitoring information for the Children, Young People and Education Committee as at Quarter 3 (1 Apr – 31 Dec) of 2023/24. The report provided Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 saving programme and a summary of reserves to enable the Committee to take

ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

The report noted that at the end of Quarter 3, there was a forecast adverse position of £0.364m on the Committees net revenue budget of £88.344m. This position was based on activity to date, projected trends in income and expenditure and potential mitigation to offset areas of adverse/favourable variance.

Members queried whether the figures for looked after children included unaccompanied asylum seekers and asked how many of those were in care in Wirral. Officers noted that they did and that the total number unaccompanied asylum seekers looked after was 17 out of 764 children looked after in total but noted that this figure changed frequently.

Members queried whether the restructuring of services would be noticed by parents in terms of capacity. Officers noted that while services were being remodelled to be more efficient, targets had been met the previous year and more were to be met this year, they noted that a further report on the remodelling of services would come to the committee in future.

Members raised the spending on the IT system used for Children's services and whether a bespoke system had been bought in. Officers noted that the system, called Liquid Logic, was already in use for social care and effectively was being expanded to cover the school system as well to help centralise information.

Members queried the senior management restructure costs and were informed that they were related to the creation of a Joint Health Commissioning post.

Resolved - That:

- 1. The forecast revenue position presented at Quarter 3 be noted.**
- 2. The progress on delivery of the 2023-24 savings programme at Quarter 3 be noted.**
- 3. The forecast level of reserves and balances at Quarter 3 be noted.**
- 4. The forecast capital position presented at Quarter 3 be noted.**

21 **ADULT LEARNING ANNUAL ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-23 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Head of Service for 14-19 Strategy presented a report on behalf of the Director for Children, Families and Education which set out the service's developments, summary of delivery and learner achievements in the 2022/23 academic year.

It noted that grant funding received from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority was £1,173,362.

Wirral Council's Lifelong Learning Service actively engaged and supported local residents (aged 19+) who were furthest from the labour market. This education provision provided learners with the confidence to take the next steps back into education and employment. As a grant funded Council service, it had the capacity to support the most disadvantaged, working on difficult issues and using innovative approaches for example, supporting community cohesion, troubled families, Children's Centres, family learning, refugees and improving mental health through learning.

The report noted that the 2022/23 academic year was very challenging for the service with further growth in qualification course delivery, new test and learn projects plus continuation of the MULTIPLY maths intervention support programme.

The Lifelong Learning Service was inspected by Ofsted, February 2018, and assessed as 'Good'. The service was also MATRIX re-accredited, July 2020, recognising its integrated high-quality delivery of careers education and support for its learners.

The Head of Service for 14-19 Strategy noted a correction under paragraph 1.3 which should have read: "The overall number of course enrolments during 2022/23 has now reverted back to pre-Covid pandemic levels..."

Members discussed the number of courses a person was likely to be enrolled on during a year, whether there was a recorded benefit to children whose parents had enrolled on the Lifelong Service, whether the service had a successful impact on getting adults that had been through the service employed, how the courses were funded and how the needs of the customers was led. They also queried whether there were notable issues with enrolment numbers for term two.

Officers responded that one person was likely to be enrolled on two courses per year, that the benefit to children was anecdotal at the moment but that it felt that the impact was positive, that there was statistical evidence that the service helped those that used it to gain employment. They noted that funding was provided by the Liverpool City Region and was granted on a year by year

basis and that the needs of the service users was very much community led by listening to residents and third sector organisations. They noted that there had been no issues with enrolment numbers to date due to the strong work by their business support team.

Resolved – That

- 1. the report be noted; and**
- 2. The services' planned improvements and recognise the contribution to improving the lives of adults and families in Wirral's more deprived communities during 2022/23 be endorsed and recognised.**

22 BREAKING THE CYCLE

The Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention presented a report on behalf of the Director for Children, Families and Education which provided the committee with the third of three reports on the Breaking the Cycle programme, focused on system change. The Breaking the Cycle programme had been a key strand of the early help and prevention approach, informing long-term system change and contributing to demand reduction for acute services.

The report outlined how Children's Services would be remodelled in 2024 informed by best practice learning from the Breaking the Cycle programme and aligned with the new Children's Social Care National Framework (Department for Education, December 2023).

It noted that the Breaking the Cycle programme was a cross-Council, multi-agency programme which was producing valuable learning about the experiences of people facing multiple disadvantage and how well the local system responded to meeting current need and its planning to prevent future need. The Breaking the Cycle programme had provided opportunity to test and learn informing operational and strategic system change.

Members queried why Wirral had such a high rate of children looked after per 10,000 population, with Wirral at 117.5 in 2023, Wirral's statistical neighbours at 111 and the national average at 71. Officers noted that Wirral was good at bringing children into care but that once they were in the system, they generally stayed there. They noted that Wirral had been improving since 2019, with numbers coming into care lower than its statistical neighbours and that we would eventually fall to similar levels as children aged and left care.

Members queried the mechanisms for community co-design of services. They were informed that the service was developed through parent carer forums,

advisory boards in children's centres as well as third sector organisations and community partners.

Members stated that they were in favour of the programme and congratulated officers on the work that had been undertaken to date.

Resolved – That the learning gained from the Breaking the Cycle programme be noted; and that the approach to remodelling Children's Services based on that learning and best practice be endorsed.

23 ALL AGE DISABILITY STRATEGY

The Assistant Director of All Age Independence and Provider Services presented a report on behalf of the Director of Care and Health which presented the draft All Age Disability Strategy 2024-2029 for noting. The strategy formed part of the work programme as an outcome of all age disability review which was approved at the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee on the 13 June 2023.

The report noted that a high proportion (22.2%) of people in Wirral lived with some kind of disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). This was 2.8% higher than across the North West and 4.9% higher than England. This proportion was projected to increase. Delivering Better Value analysis forecasted Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) caseloads in Wirral to increase from 2,700 in 2023, to 4,200 by 2028. These young people will age out of Children's into Adult Social Care, and with that bring increased expenditure.

The All Age Disability Strategy aimed to improve outcomes for the people in Wirral who had a disability. It also provided strategic direction for the next 5 years to enable the Council to plan ahead and provide improved services, across housing and employment, that support people to live as independently as possible and can prevent needs from escalating. Preventative care not only improves outcomes for residents but can reduce cost to councils across a resident's lifetime. With financial efficiencies identified for this service area over the coming years, it was necessary that this strategy was delivered to avoid future costs.

Members queried the timing of the report, which had been agreed in full the previous day by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee. Members felt that the report should have come to them for comment prior to it being agreed. Officers noted Members feelings and noted that work had been done across both committees prior to it reaching them. It was agreed that in future a further workshop could be provided to Members of both committees before the report came before them.

Members queried why Wirral had such a high proportion of people with a disability compared the North West and National averages. The Assistant Director of All Age Independence and Provider Services offered to provide a briefing note to Members to give further detail on these figures.

Resolved – That

- 1. The coproduced draft All Age Disability Strategy 2024-2029, included as Appendix 1 to this report be noted; and**
- 2. The receipt of annual progress and impact reports of the implementation of the strategy be agreed.**

24 **ALL AGE DISABILITY REVIEW - IMPLEMENTATION**

The Assistant Director of All Age Independence and Provider Services presented a report on behalf of the Director of Care and Health which presented the progress to date on the implementation programme following the All-Age Disability Review that was approved at the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee on the 13 June 2023.

The report noted that there was a greater reliance in Wirral on more traditional care services, which led to Wirral being a higher spend Council on disability services. This could also mean that outcomes achieved for people with disabilities would not always help them to achieve aspirational targets or to be as independent as they could be. This could be improved through better alignment, joining up planning, and collaboration between services, as evidenced in the report following a review of Education, Health, and Care Plans. The experiences of people supported across the life course would be greatly improved by focussing upon their aspirations and life goals in a more effective and clear manner.

The report also noted that a high proportion (22.2%) of people in Wirral lived with some kind of disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). This was 2.8% higher than across the Northwest and 4.9% higher than England. This proportion was projected to increase, for example Delivering Better Value analysis forecasts Special Education Needs Disability caseloads in Wirral to increase from 2,700 in 2023, to 4,200 by 2028. Whilst not all of these young people would require support for Adult Social Care, a number of these young people would transition and with that, the Council was likely to see increased expenditure.

Members queried the reason for only looking into 1.9% of Education, Health and Care Plans for analysis. Officers noted that the emphasis wasn't on the sample base but finding evidence on housing, employment and education and had looked at approx. 60 plans.

Resolved – That the significant progress to date of the implementation programme following the All-Age Disability Review as in Appendix 1 be noted.

25 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced their report which reminded members that the Children, Young People and Housing Committee was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme was to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which were the remit of the Committee.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE **Tuesday 23 July 2024**

REPORT TITLE:	PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM EDUCATION KEY STAGE 4
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to provide members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an overview of Wirral Local Authority's requirement to arrange full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion for KS4 pupils. The successful bidder (s) will be awarded a contract for a period of 5 years from 1 September 2024 – 31 July 2029. A report was put forward on Monday 25th September 2023. The tender process for KS4 was unsuccessful. However, this academic year we have completed 2 successful pilots. This is based on a new model around geographical areas, which we believe will open the tender up to more bids, as the pilots can no longer continue.

To allow opportunity to scrutinise this area of work.

This matter affects all wards within the borough but is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to note and comment on the development of Wirral Local Authority's requirement to arrange full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion for KS4 pupils.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Children, Young People & Education Committee have the opportunity to monitor, review and challenge performance in relation to and a greater understanding of the role of the Local Authority in relation to Wirral's statutory responsibility to arrange full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion and the use of alternative provision, (AP)
- 1.2 The Alternative Provision (AP) used by the Local Authority for education arranged for young people because of suspension, illness, or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement of the Wirral Local Authority to arrange full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion therefore, no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The DfE define Alternative Provision as follows (Alternative provision - Statutory guidance for local authorities 2013) (Revised Behaviour in Schools Guidance and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance Government response to Consultation July 2022) (Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England September 2022).

- Education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education.
- Education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion.
- Education for pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

Alternative Provision (AP) providers can offer high quality off-site tutoring or therapeutic intervention services to meet children and young people's varied and complex needs. By using alternative provision, programmes of learning can be designed to meet the needs and interests of the individual pupil. This makes it more likely that they will engage with learning and succeed in education. The overall aim of such provision is ideally to enable the child or young person to return full time to their usual place of education or a similar setting.

- 3.2 The most common type of alternative provision is a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU): a school that caters for children who are not able to attend a mainstream school. These are much smaller than mainstream schools, with very small class numbers and lots of pastoral support. Pupils may attend alternative provision full-time or parttime, with the rest of their education taking place at their usual school.

They must receive an equivalent full-time education to their peers in mainstream schools.

Historically, Wirral's main source of alternative provision was provided by the local authority PRU, this later became Emslie Morgan Academy - this closed at the end of the academic year 2019 due to poor Ofsted inspection and poor outcomes for young people. With the closure of the PRU a decision was taken by school's forum to look at a different model in Wirral.

- 3.3 From the start of the academic year 2019/2020, the local authority has commissioned provision for pupils that have permanently excluded has been delivered by Progress Schools; they are commissioned to provide up to 112 places for pupils across the secondary age range. The impact of this this was then reviewed the learning has led to a new commissioning process.
- 3.4 From September 2023 the offer changed. As part of a tendering process registered providers were requested to submit an indication of interest in delivery of the service for Permanently Excluded young people. An Evaluation Panel was set up with LA Officers and Local Headteachers to review the submissions. Tenders were submitted by Progress Schools (KS3) and St Peters Catholic Primary School (KS2), which were successful. We received bids for the in addition for these Key Stages, however, KS4 only received one submission. This was from a provider, which unfortunately, was an unregistered online provision and therefore unsuitable.

This has left the Wirral without a KS4 provision and would not meet our statutory duty as per Education Act 1996 section 101 (A and B). The decision has therefore been made to put in place a pilot project with Ed Start Alternative provision to meet Statutory duty for KS4 only. This provider cannot start until at the earliest October 2023. A resolution for this, has been to approach the incumbent KS4 provider, Progress Schools, to request an extension to the current provision until Ed Start are able to provide the relevant provision. Progress School have agreed that they can meet this statutory requirement. The pilot will start in January 2024 and run until the end of the 23/24 academic year. This will enable us to go out to tender for a KS4 only contract for 4 years which will bring the contract back in line with the other Key stages (KS2 and 3).

- 3.5 In terms of numbers, 56 pupils (27 KS3, 30 KS4) were placed in the LA commissioned Alternative provision 2022-2023. 12 KS3 pupils were reintegrated back into Wirral mainstream secondary schools. 5 pupils with EHCPs successfully transitioned into appropriate special schools.
- 3.6 Monitoring of the new provision:
- Monthly Monitoring Meetings during the first 6 months of the contracts, moving to quarterly monitoring meeting after that time. Providing data and report to Delivery Lead and Commissioners
 - Annual AP quality assurance document

- Provider Forums
- Showcase Sessions
- Case Studies

3.7 Following consultation, the new [Area SEND Inspection Framework and Handbook](#) has been published by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The new framework and handbook commenced from January 2023. This will be used to inform judgements on the efficacy of local areas' arrangements for children and young people with SEND. The new framework will focus on how alternative provision is commissioned and overseen. Alternative provision is sometimes commissioned by education providers (such as schools and colleges) and is outside of local authorities' control. OFSTED stress that during area SEND full inspections, they will assess the local authority's commissioning and oversight of alternative provision. Education providers' use of alternative provision is already subject to separate institutional inspection arrangements under the [education inspection framework](#).

3.8 Guild of Alternative Provision

Wirral has a strong framework of Unregistered Alternative Provision providers. They are part of the Wirral Guild; providers are subject to minimum requirements and annual checks. From September the intention is to run drop ins for providers to increase the quality assurance. The Guild deliver a broad curriculum offer by working collaboratively with key partners: schools, approved Alternative Education Providers, students, parents, the LA and appropriate external agencies including Educational Psychologists, Social Services, Health, etc. All provision is quality assured for safeguarding, and providers will be expected to sign up to the Guild's core values:

- Absolute commitment to young peoples' safety and well-being
- Positive regard and respect for young people.
- Engagement in a curriculum which is relevant and tailored to individual needs and aspirations, through pedagogy which is responsive to students' learning styles and promotes growing independence.
- Holistic provision which seeks to address wider issues which could be barriers to effective learning.
- Quality relationships, both as a pre-requisite to learning and for social learning in its own right.
- Equality and justice; young people engaged in any form of Alternative Education should have access to the same opportunities, qualifications and quality educational experience as their peers. There should be no stigma attached to young people who access education through Alternative routes, or those who work with them.

- Commitment to partnership working and information sharing through agreed protocols, including the sharing of best practice.
- 3.9 The Wirral Guild of Alternative Education aims to offer the best quality educational and therapeutic provision to students who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from mainstream schooling, to ensure that they can achieve the best possible outcomes within a caring, supportive, and safe environment. The Guild is committed, wherever possible and appropriate, to the re-integration of young people back into mainstream education following a period of intensive intervention, but understands that, for some students, full/part time provision within an alternative setting may be the most appropriate placement for identified individuals. It is hoped that, through the co-ordinated work of the Guild, fewer Wirral students will be permanently excluded, thus avoiding the stigma and reduced life chances which inevitably accompany this course of action. Some Guild provision will supplement schools' curriculum offer through courses not normally delivered through more traditional curriculum organisation such as Hair and Beauty, Horticulture or Construction.
- 3.10 All providers who contribute to the Wirral Guild of Alternative Education are subject to agreed safeguarding processes and must meet Wirral's safety expectations in order to be part of the Guild. Schools that access provision outside of the approved Guild partners must ensure that they conduct all safeguarding and quality checks, although it is important to note that schools retain the duty of care whenever accessing Alternative Education provision.
- 3.11 The Wirral Guild of Alternative Education offer is monitored through the Wirral Alternative Education Strategy Group which consists of LA officers and representative Headteachers. This body meets every half term and minutes of meetings are recorded and retained. Key personnel are employed by Wirral Council.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications arising from this report results in financial implications of providing Authority's requirement to arrange full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion.
- 4.2 £1.695 Million **Annual value**, split into 3 different geographical lots. Providers can apply for one lot or up to 3 lots, as required.
- LOT 1 - 40 places x 18,000 per pupil = £720,000 per year
 LOT 2 - 25 places x £18,000 per pupil = £450,000 per year
 LOT 3 - 25 places x £18,000 per pupil = £450,000 per year
- 4.3 Value of community provision. £5,000 per place maximum of 5 places for each lot.
- LOT 1: 5 places x £5000 = £25,000 each year

LOT 2: 5 places x £5000 = £25,000 each year

LOT 3: 5 places x £5000 = £25,000 each year

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to make arrangements to provide “suitable education at school, or otherwise than at school, for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them”. Suitable education is defined as “efficient education suitable to the age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs”, the child (or young person) may have. The education must be full time unless the local authority determines that it would not be in the best interests of the child or young person, due to their mental or physical health.
- 5.2 The Department for Education Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance 2013 states: ‘Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such arrangements being made. This applies to all children of compulsory school age resident in the local authority area, whether they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend. Full-time education for excluded pupils must begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.
- 5.3 This report demonstrates how the Local Authority fulfils its responsibility to arrange full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is a risk around the amount per pupil Wirral Local Authority commissions for full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion. The cost of independent school places is increasing, and this could put pressure on the budget allocated to satisfy the statutory duty the local authority has responsibility for. A further risk is the possible increase in demand. Schools nationally are indicating that permanent exclusions are on the increase and there is a greater demand for Alternative Provision to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. There is a risk around the amount per pupil Wirral Local Authority commissions for full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion. The national average for this is £18,000 per place compared with the Wirral’s £13,382.98 per place. This is the reason for so few AP providers applying for the tender in 2023.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The feedback we are receiving from Wirral Schools is positive about the tender going forward and the statutory responsibility the Local Authority fulfils in arranging full-time education from and including the sixth day of a permanent exclusion.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The content of this report is not expected to have any impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no community wealth implications arising from the report.

REPORT AUTHOR:

Name: Chris Lowcock

School Improvement Senior Manager AP and Inclusion
email: chrislowcock@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook/area-send-inspections-framework-and-handbook>

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with section a of its Terms of Reference:

1. Exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting Date

Wirral Schools Forum - 24 November 2020

Wirral Schools Forum - 18 January 2022

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 25 September 2023



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday 23 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM HOUSING STRATEGY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the Cheshire and Merseyside commissioning work programme for “Independent and Fulfilling Lives” and the development of a Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy. The strategy has been jointly produced with the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and will support a framework for all commissioners when assessing local housing need for this cohort of people and supporting new developments, alongside general housing to meet those needs.

The report supports the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27, specifically the 'Promoting Independence and Healthier Lives' theme.

The report went before the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee on 5 March 2024. The committee resolved that:

1. The Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 to this report be approved; and
2. The report be considered for information at the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee at a future date to be agreed

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to note the Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 There has been an absence of a coordinated regional policy, and this brings the commissioning intentions in to one key document, which can be shared with key stakeholders.
- 1.2 Some support and care providers work across local authority boundaries, and the strategy will ensure a consistent approach when cross boundary working
- 1.3 There may be a future requirement to jointly commission services across local authority areas within Cheshire and Merseyside, especially where there are low volume but highly complex cases, and this strategy will support any joint developments.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To have a single strategy for each local authority, but this would not have supported any cross boundary working, or the regional requirements on an NHS Integrated Care system region.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The 9 local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside (Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington and Wirral) with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System (ICS) work together in order to commission and deliver the right mix of housing, care and health services required by people with learning disabilities and autistic people who have care/support needs.
- 3.2 The purpose of this Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and autistic people is to set out the requirement for and the opportunities to develop good quality housing and supported accommodation to meet the needs of the population of people with learning disabilities and autistic people in Cheshire and Merseyside. This includes people who are living with their families/informal carers, people living in supported housing, people living in care homes, people who are inpatients, and young people who are known to the local authorities and NHS and who will become adults over the next 5 years.
- 3.3 We want to encourage the development of housing and supported accommodation options that are available for people who need housing to rent and for some people who may benefit from home ownership. We intend to co-produce the delivery and implementation of this strategy with the people who will be living in this housing and supported accommodation.

- 3.4 By working together through this strategy, the local authorities and the NHS will ensure that:
- Housing, health and care services for people with learning disabilities/autistic people are proactively commissioned to meet peoples' needs;
 - People will in most cases have a tenancy with associated tenure rights;
 - Housing will be well designed to meet people's needs as appropriate;
 - People will have access to personalised care and support as well as access to 'core' support services where this is appropriate; and
 - Capital funding for housing development will be sought through NHS England and/or Homes England as appropriate.
- 3.5 This strategy is aimed at:
- Housing organisations that provide mainstream and supported housing, including those currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area and those who may consider operating here in the future;
 - Support and care organisations that provide services for people with learning disabilities and autistic people with care/support needs; and
 - Community organisations in the Cheshire and Merseyside area with an interest in housing and supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities and autistic people with care/support needs.
- 3.6 Through this strategy we will commission and enable a wide range of housing and supported accommodation, including specialist and supported housing, that enables people to live independently in their communities, including:
- Mainstream housing for individuals with personalised care and support;
 - Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained accommodation or shared housing, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support but are able to live in close proximity to other people who may have care/support needs and within local communities; and
 - Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs, as well as personalised care/support.
- 3.7 In 2022, Cheshire and Merseyside Association of Directors of Adult Social Services Commissioners worked with Campbell Tickell, a Business Management Consultancy in London, to produce a report on the future numbers of Adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism who may require care with accommodation as an alternative to acute based hospital care within a community setting. In 2023, Cheshire and Merseyside Commissioners used the data from the Campbell Tickell exercise to work with the Housing Learning and Improvement Network to develop a gap analysis to inform the development of the Learning Disability and Autism Housing strategy. The Gap analysis showed for Wirral for Supported Living between 2022-2033 that an additional 259 units of accommodation would be required to meet demographic demand.

3.8 In Wirral we anticipate that the 259 figure will be covered by some relets of existing schemes, with new schemes being developed and new style accommodation (own front door) being commissioned and that some of the need for supported living will be met differently by an increase in shared lives placements or general needs housing with support as follows:

Increase in shared lives	Increase in use of general needs housing
26	46

3.9 Where possible, residential homes for adults with learning disabilities will not be used, other than for the most complex people, working in collaboration with NHS ICB commissioners.

3.10 Future monitoring of the strategy and governance oversight will be agreed with Council officers across departments and an implementation plan agreed.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the learning disability and autism housing strategy.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure that there is sufficiency within its local provision to meet local assessed needs, and this includes working in collaboration with housing colleagues to ensure accommodation is in place for this cohort of people.

5.2 Adult Social Care commissioners are working closely with Housing colleagues to ensure that specialist supported housing meets the requirements for housing benefit purposes.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report. The ensuing work from the delivery and implementation of the strategy can be managed within available staffing resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 There is a risk that people will not have suitable and timely accommodation to meet local needs. This risk is mitigated by having the strategy in place and ensuring that capacity and demand modelling is in place to ensure sufficiency of accommodation for this cohort of people.

7.2 There is a risk that if the strategy is not approved, that a local one will need to be developed which could delay improved outcomes for local people, and also not ensure consistency with regional local authorities.

7.3 There is a risk that the implementation is not managed. This risk will be mitigated by the implementation being managed by Adult Social Care working in liaison with operational services and other Council departments.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The draft strategy was shared with some targeted local support and specialist Autism providers for feedback, alongside local self-advocacy groups. Feedback was given to the Housing Learning and Improvement Network and Cheshire and Merseyside colleagues to inform the strategy. A draft strategy has also been shared in an easy ready format (appendix 1) and officers have been in place to support conversations and meetings with people who use services and care providers had this been requested.

8.2 The draft strategy was discussed at the Wirral Supported Living Provider Forum which is led by the Contract Management team.

8.3 The draft strategy was shared with colleagues from Housing and Regeneration who also provided feedback to the Housing Learning and Improvement Network. Housing and Regeneration colleagues.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and can be accessed by the following link: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Any new build housing developments and existing scheme remodels will be considered for environmental impact and support requested from Council specialists in that area.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Housing developers, Registered Landlords and care and support provider employ local people for Wirral and therefore bring social value to the Borough.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Jayne Marshall**
Interim Assistant Director, Strategic Commissioning and Integrated Services
telephone: 0151 666 4828
email: jaynemarshall@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Easy Read Version Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing strategy

Appendix 2 Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Campbell Tickell report 2022

Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Gap analysis 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with paragraphs (a) and (e) of its Terms of Reference:

- (a) exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council;
- (e) any other functions comprised in partnership arrangements with other bodies connected with the delivery of services for children, young people and families

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee (Update on Extra Care Housing)	19/09/2023
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	05/03/2024



Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Strategy for people with learning disabilities and autistic people-Summary

Cheshire and Merseyside Housing Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities and Autistic People-Summary

In this document you will find:



Introduction

About this **strategy**



Vision

What we aim to achieve through this **strategy**



Needs

What the housing needs are over the next 10 years



Delivery

How we will achieve our aims and meet the housing needs over the next 10 years:

- A. Commissioning**
- B. General Needs Housing**
- C. Quality Assurance**
- D. Housing Providers**
- E. Capital Funding**
- F. Governance**



Introduction

When we say **strategy** we mean a big plan of what we need and how we will make it happen.



This is an easy read **summary** of the full **strategy**. That means it does not have all of the details but it does have enough information for you to understand what we need and how we will make it happen.



This strategy has been developed by NHS Cheshire, Merseyside Integrated Care System and the 9 local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside.

The 9 local authorities are:

- ✓ Warrington
- ✓ Liverpool
- ✓ St Helens
- ✓ Halton
- ✓ Knowsley
- ✓ Cheshire East
- ✓ Cheshire West
- ✓ Sefton
- ✓ Wirral





The Vision

Vision means what we are hoping to see:



The best quality of life we can get for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people.

We will do this by:



- making sure we have enough good quality housing and supported housing



- making Cheshire and Merseyside a place where people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people with care and support needs can live well and **thrive**

Thrive means that you do much better than okay, you do well and you succeed in life.



Needs

This strategy will support us to **commission** a wide range of housing and supported housing so that people can live independently in their communities.



To **commission** is to provide the funding for a service or a piece of work. It involves finding out what is needed and a contract for the organisation that is chosen to do the work.



The range of housing will include:

- **General needs housing** for individuals with personalised care and support.

General needs housing is housing that is available to anyone in the community.



- Supported housing that is suited to people who need to live on their own or in shared housing in the community, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support.



- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet people's needs. This might mean adaptations for accessibility. It might mean that it is adapted to meet support needs.



- To meet the housing needs of people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people over the next 10 years we will need:



X 1,700

- Around 1,700 supported housing homes across Cheshire & Merseyside



X 400

- Around 400 general needs homes, usually social housing for rent



Delivery

Achieving our aims and meeting the housing needs over the next 10 years.



A. Commissioning

We will **commission** and provide a mix of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people by:



- Reviewing the use of shared supported housing



- **Commissioning** the new supported housing that is required to meet the need that we know about



- Increasing the number of Shared Lives carers



- **Commissioning** the housing needed by people who are living in hospital settings at the moment



- Making Home Ownership for people with Long – term Disabilities (**HOLD**) more available

HOLD is a home ownership scheme for people with long term disabilities.



B. General Needs Housing

We will secure extra general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people by:



- Using social housing that we already have access to



- Working with local **Registered Providers** to meet the wider housing needs in this big plan

Registered Providers are the social landlords that we know and work with.



- **Leasing** from private landlords
Leasing is a type of renting agreement.



- Supported housing providers developing and/or buying more housing to help people move in to permanent homes.



- Reviewing the use and suitability of **Property Pool Plus or Choice Based Lettings** for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people

Property Pool Plus or Choice Based Lettings is the scheme that allows you to choose where you live and the type of property you live in if you are on the housing register.



C. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance means how we will make sure that the services and homes we have are good enough.



We will put in place a **quality assurance** framework for supported housing commissioned by local councils which measures how the housing and support makes things better for people living in supported housing.

We will do this by:



- Identifying all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people that has the status of 'supported exempt accommodation' in the Supported Housing Act



- Developing quality **assessment and assurance criteria**, that demonstrate the Councils' expectations in relation to the quality of supported housing including value for money

Assessment and assurance criteria means a list of things that we will check are in place and being done well.



D. Housing Providers

Housing Providers are organisations that build, own and rent housing in our communities.



We will support and encourage **housing providers** to deliver a wide range of housing and supported housing options that meet the needs we know about.

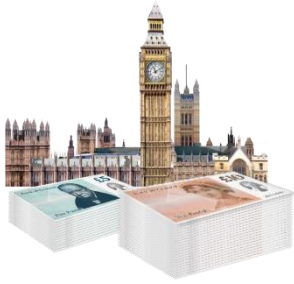
We will do this by:



- Talking with **housing providers**, including the largest social housing providers in the Cheshire & Merseyside area. This might be through supported housing or **general needs housing**.



- Finding the gaps in the supported housing provider market. This includes what providers are able to do and how many properties they have. Contact providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage them to develop their offer into this area.



E. Capital Funding

Capital Funding is money available from the government, banks and other organisations in this case for the development of housing.



We will make the most of the use of a wide range of **capital funding** for development of adapted and supported housing.

We will do this by:



- Working with providers to make the most of the capital funding that they can bring to the area to develop the housing and supported housing we need



- Developing our relationship with Homes England to make the most of investment from the Affordable Homes Programme for the supported housing we need



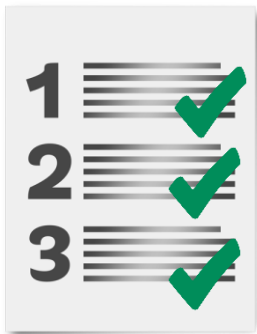
- Look at where it is possible for supported and adapted housing to be part of the **affordable housing contribution** on development sites

The **affordable housing contribution** is the housing that organisations are made to include when they are building a new development of houses. This is to make sure that we do not **ONLY** have very large and expensive homes.



F. Governance

Governance means the things we will put in place to make sure things are run properly. To make sure the rules are followed and no laws are broken.



We will put in place governance and decision-making **processes** that make it possible for the local authorities in Cheshire Merseyside with their NHS partners to work together well. This is needed to make what is in this housing strategy possible.

Processes are the details of how things should be done.

Housing strategy: people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to 2032/33

Cheshire and Merseyside

Version: Second Draft

January 2024

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Executive summary

Introduction

The 9 councils in Cheshire and Merseyside with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System have developed a *Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism*. Our vision is:

To achieve the best quality of life we can for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to live independently, with personalised support and care.

We will do this by securing the provision of good quality housing and supported housing and making Cheshire and Merseyside a place where people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs can live well and thrive.

What we mean by housing and supported housing

Through this strategy we will facilitate and commission a wide range of housing and supported housing that enables people to live independently in their communities, including:

- General needs housing for individuals with personalised care and support.
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained housing or shared housing within local communities, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support.
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs.

Over the next 10 years, it is estimated that Cheshire and Merseyside will need approximately 1,700 additional supported housing dwellings to meet the identified housing needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. It is estimated that there is also a need for approximately 400 general needs homes, typically social housing for rent over the same period.

Delivery

To deliver this *Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism* we will:

- A. Commission and enable a mix of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism by:
 - Reviewing the use of shared supported housing.
 - Commissioning new supported housing that is required to meet identified need.
 - Increasing the number of Shared Lives carers.

- Commissioning the housing required by people currently living in inpatient settings.
 - Making Home Ownership for people with Long – term Disabilities (HOLD) available.
- B. Secure additional mainstream, general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism through:
- Direct provision by Councils with retained housing stock.
 - Working with local Registered Providers to meet the wider housing need as identified in this strategy, including using existing stock where appropriate.
 - Leasing from private landlords.
 - Supported housing providers developing and/or procuring additional move on accommodation.
 - Reviewing the use and suitability of Choice Based Lettings for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.
- C. Put in place a quality assurance framework for supported housing commissioned by the Councils which measures the benefits and impact for people living in supported housing:
- Identifying all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism people that has the status of 'supported exempt accommodation' in the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.
 - Develop regionally agreed quality assessment and assurance criteria, that demonstrate the Councils' expectations in relation to the quality of supported housing including value for money.
- D. Facilitate and encourage housing providers to deliver a wide range of housing and supported housing options that meet identified need, including:
- Discussing/agreeing with housing providers, including the largest social housing providers in the Cheshire & Merseyside region, how they can contribute to the delivery of the housing strategy, both in relation to supported housing and access to general needs housing.
 - Identifying gaps in the supported housing provider market (in terms of capability and capacity) and approach potential providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage new 'entrants' into the local supported housing market.
- E. Maximise the use of a wide range of capital funding for development of adapted and supported housing, by:
- Engaging with supported housing providers and other Registered Providers to maximise capital investment that they can bring to the development of the housing and supported housing required.
 - Developing a strategic relationship with NHS England and with Homes England to maximise investment from the Affordable Homes Programme in the supported housing required.

- Considering the potential for supported and adapted housing to form part of the affordable housing contribution on larger development sites, including in relation to section106 agreements.
- F. Put in place governance and decision-making processes that enable the Councils in Cheshire and Merseyside with their NHS partners to collaborate effectively to implement this housing strategy.

1. Introduction

Our intentions

The 9 councils in Cheshire and Merseyside (Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington and Wirral) with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System (ICS) work together in order to commission and deliver the right mix of housing, care and health services required by people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who have care and support needs.

The purpose of this *Housing strategy for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism people* is to set out the requirement for and the opportunities to develop good quality housing and supported housing to meet the needs of the population of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism in Cheshire and Merseyside. This includes:

- people who are living with their families/informal carers,
- people living in supported housing,
- people living in care homes,
- people who are inpatients, and
- young people who are known to the councils and NHS and who will become adults over the next 5 years.

We want to encourage the development of housing and supported housing options that are available for people who need housing to rent and for some people who may benefit from home ownership.

We intend to consult on the delivery of this strategy with the people who will be living in this housing and supported housing.

Intended benefits of this strategy

By working together through this strategy the councils and the NHS will ensure that:

- Housing, health and care services for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism are proactively commissioned to meet peoples' needs.
- People will in most cases have a tenancy with associated tenure rights.
- Housing will be well designed to meet people's needs as appropriate.
- People will have access to personalised care and support as well as access to 'core' support services where this is appropriate.

- Capital funding for housing development will be sought through NHS England and/or Homes England as appropriate.

Context

There are a number of local and national policies that affect the supported housing sector and which will influence the delivery of this strategy in terms of the types of housing and supported housing that are commissioned and developed. Key relevant national policy includes:

- The recent Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act¹ including new National Supported Housing Standards.
- The *Building the Right Support Action Plan*², published in 2022, updates the original *Building the Right Support*³ from 2015, reinforces the importance of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism having a good home.
- *Building the Right Home*⁴ sets out guidance and principles for housing for people with a learning disability and autistic people that need specialist and supported housing.

This is shown in detail at annexe 1.

Housing and care and support providers should ensure they are aware of and take account of these local and national policies in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism people.

Our intended audience

This strategy is aimed at:

- Housing organisations that provide mainstream and supported housing, including those currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area and those who may consider operating here in the future.
- Support and care organisations that provide services for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs.
- Community organisations in the Cheshire and Merseyside area with an interest in housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs.

¹ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

² [Building the Right Support for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People Action Plan - July 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right support](#)

⁴ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right home](#)

2. Vision and ambition

Our vision

Our vision is *to achieve the best quality of life we can for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to live independently, with personalised support and care.*

We will achieve our vision by:

- Securing the provision of *good quality* housing and supported housing where people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs can live well and thrive.
- Developing a *range* of housing and supported housing over the next 5 years and beyond, that are tailored to reflect the identified needs within our local communities.
- Ensuring that *support and care services*, delivered to people within supported housing and those living in general needs housing, are effective in promoting people's wellbeing and independence.

This strategy will make a *positive difference* to the lives of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism by having a greater mix and range of housing options, including:

- General needs housing for individuals with personalised care and support.
- Supported housing that is suited to people who need their own self-contained accommodation or shared housing, with a mix of personalised and shared care and support, but are able to live in close proximity to other people who may have care and support needs and within local communities.
- Housing and supported housing that is adapted in a variety of ways to meet the needs of people who need an accessible home and/or a home that is adapted to meet their support needs, as well as personalised care and support.
- Housing for people who have a live alone plan for a variety of reasons and who need an individual property either with or without specialist features to enable them to live in the least restrictive way.

3. Strategic objectives

To achieve our vision, the strategic objectives of this housing strategy are:

A. To improve the range of housing and supported housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

Over the next 5-10 years we will encourage a mix of housing and supported housing that meets the needs identified in our local communities. This will involve providing a spectrum of housing options and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, including:

- renovating existing properties and
- developing new homes.

B. To influence the design and quality of housing and supported housing

The councils with their NHS partners want to influence the design and delivery of the types of housing and supported housing that are developed in the following ways:

- We will work with housing providers to identify the most suitable locations based on local intelligence about where people want to live.
- We want to facilitate and encourage a range of housing and care and support providers to work in Cheshire and Merseyside to ensure the mix of housing and supported housing services delivered reflects local needs.
- Housing and supported housing should be of the highest quality standards and have care and support services from providers who are registered with the CQC as appropriate.

C. To plan for and manage demand for housing and supported housing

We are planning ahead to meet the changing and future needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. To do this we will:

- Influence the development of housing and supported housing to ensure there is the right mix of accommodation available to meet people's current and future needs.
- Include the development of and access to additional housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

- Aim to ensure that Local Plans to incorporate the need for specialist and supported housing and that these housing needs are part of local housing strategies and planning policies.

D. To encourage opportunities to invest and develop

The councils with their NHS partners want to promote investment in housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. To make this happen we will:

- Share our market intelligence to inform and influence the decisions of housing and care and support providers.
- Where possible, seek to use local authority and NHS resources, such as land and buildings, to facilitate the development of housing and supported housing.
- Engage in a dialogue with housing and care and support providers about the types of housing and supported housing required by people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.
- Seek to create a business environment where housing and care and support providers have the confidence and assurance to invest in Cheshire and Merseyside.
- Support housing providers to remain viable and deliver growth plans that include provision for adapted properties and supported housing in recognition of the higher costs of delivering and maintaining this type of accommodation for housing providers.

4. Contemporary housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

To promote contemporary practice in the development and delivery of a range of housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, we have set out design guidance to influence future housing development.

Design guidance to housing and support providers

To assist housing and support providers we have provided guidance in relation to some of the characteristics of the housing and supported housing that we are seeking:

- Some individuals may find it difficult to live with others in a shared setting and therefore there is the need for self-contained accommodation, including separate front doors, ideally built in a cluster model to enable efficiencies around the care delivery.
- We encourage housing providers to deliver homes to space standards that are consistent with suggested space standards (54m² for a 1-bed dwelling) within extra care housing/supported housing⁵. It is important to note that some people with learning disabilities and/or Autism may need homes that exceed these space standards.
- New accommodation may need to include a staff sleep in space, to allow night-time staff to be accommodated.
- Some people need more bespoke accommodation; whatever housing is developed will need to be adaptable to meet diverse needs. Accommodation needs to be future proofed so that it can be used for a range of people and is able to accommodate innovative technology. The use of assistive technology (AT) should be promoted to ensure that people are able to be as independent as possible; it could in turn help to reduce care costs. Assessments for the use of AT should form part of people's care and support assessments and plans.
- Locations for developments are important in order that people can be supported to access the community. Therefore, we suggest that most new developments should be based in proximity to semi-urban / urban areas, which would provide ease of access to transport and activities. However, a small number of people may not be able to cope with suburban / urban environments and may need the peace and tranquillity of a more rural setting.

⁵ https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Factsheets/Design-Principles-For-Extra-Care-Housing-3rdEdition.pdf

- Some of the people we are seeking to commission housing and support for have experienced trauma in their lives. Good design can mitigate the negative effects of trauma⁶.

Examples of contemporary practice in housing and support for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

We have identified a range of contemporary practice examples in relation to the design of housing and support that reflects the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs, including the need for a range of housing adaptations and the creation of trauma informed environments for some people.

These are shown at annexe 3.

⁶ <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Events/HAPPI-Hour-Trauma-Informed-Design-within-Learning-Disabilities-Environments/>

5. Need for housing and supported housing

The estimated need for housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism is based on evidence from:

- Analysis of work undertaken by Campbell Tickell for Cheshire & Merseyside ADASS in 2022.
- Qualitative evidence from commissioners from the councils in Cheshire & Merseyside.

Detail in relation to evidence of need for housing and supported housing is shown at annex 4.

Quantitative evidence of need

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership commissioned Campbell Tickell in 2002 to undertake an assessment of the need for 'future accommodation with support needs' over a 10 year period from 2022/23 to 2032/33.

This assessment identifies need for 'accommodation with support needs' to 2032 for each of the nine councils and at Cheshire & Merseyside level. Based on the report from Campbell Tickell, 'Accommodation with support needs' is taken to mean 'supported housing'.

Tabel 1 shows the estimated level of need for supported housing for each local authority and for Cheshire & Merseyside to 2032/33. The table below shows that a total of 1,679 supported housing units will be required across Cheshire & Merseyside over the period to 2032/33 to meet the needs that have been identified (including some adjustments to take account of the projected learning disability population). This is an indicative number of units and the actual number required could vary upwards or downwards, depending on the number of relets and other factors (Cambell Tickell, 2022).

In addition there are 54 'patients' in hospital settings who are NHS 'Specialised Commissioning Patients'.

Table 1. Estimated need for supported housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Supported housing by 2032/33
Cheshire East	160
Cheshire West & Chester	261
Halton	189
Knowsley	152
Liverpool	104
St Helens	160
Sefton	246
Warrington	148
Wirral	259
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679

Source: Campbell Tickell, 2022

It is possible that some of this estimated need for supported housing could be met through the use of Shared Lives accommodation. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.165 additional Shared Lives places over the period to 2032/33.

It is estimated that there is a need for c.380 additional general needs housing units over the period to 2032/33. This is shown in table 2.

It should be noted that the estimated need for additional Shared Lives accommodation would reduce the estimated need for supported housing over the period to 2032/33.

Table 2. Estimated need for Shared Lives and general needs housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for general needs housing 2032/33
Cheshire East	58
Cheshire West & Chester	58
Halton	12
Knowsley	30
Liverpool	108
St Helens	28
Sefton	16
Warrington	26
Wirral	46
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	382

Qualitative evidence of need

Qualitative evidence of need has been derived from insights and evidence from commissioners about local trends and the nature of future need for supported housing and housing in their area for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. This is shown at annexe 4.

Gap analysis: Summary

The quantitative and qualitative evidence of need for housing is summarised below.

The total estimated need is for an additional 1,679 units of 'supported housing' by 2032 across Cheshire & Merseyside, the equivalent of 120 additional units per annum (since 2022). This is taken to mean increased need predominantly for self-contained supported housing.

It is estimated that there is a need for an additional c.165 Shared Lives places by 2032.

It is estimated that there is a need for c.380 units of general needs housing by 2032.

All councils in Cheshire & Merseyside have a need for additional supported housing over the period to 2032.

Qualitative local evidence indicates the following *trends* in relation to current and future need for housing:

- There is evidence of increasing need for general needs housing, generally 1 bed units to rent from social landlords.

- There is a need for additional self-contained supported housing.
- There is limited evidence of additional need for shared supported housing. Any shared supported housing commissioned in future needs to be well designed and future-proofed, for example to accommodate people with reduced mobility. Some existing shared supported housing is likely to be decommissioned.
- There is some evidence of need for additional Shared Lives places.
- There is a need for additional respite accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. Some of this need could be met through the development of 'clusters' of self-contained flats where a dwelling is used as respite accommodation.
- There is very limited evidence of need for either residential care or nursing care as people live in suitable housing in the community. However, some people with very complex support needs, for whom a housing based option is not appropriate, are likely to live in residential/nursing care settings. Councils will determine locally with their partners and stakeholders any transition required from the use of residential care to supported housing or other housing options.
- The number of people currently living in acute hospital settings is low but will continue to decline as people move to housing based alternatives in the community.

Developing a housing pathway

To meet this range of housing needs, we have identified the need for a *housing pathway* which includes a mix of housing and supported housing options, which offer people different housing choices, from general needs housing with packages of care and support tailored to individuals' needs through to supported housing options with 24/7 support.

This pathway of housing and supported housing options is required, in part, to reduce the use of inpatient settings and residential care, as well to maximise the range of housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. The councils and their NHS partners want to make it easier for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to access these housing options.

It should be emphasised that a move to one housing option may not be permanent and there is an assumption that some people will move between different housing options in response to changing needs and circumstances.

A wider range of housing and supported housing options will include:

- A. General needs housing where a person receives personalised care and support.
- B. Accessible housing, for example bungalows, for people who need an adapted home along with personalised care and support.

- C. Small 'clusters' of flats where a person has their own self contained home with some communal spaces, such as a shared lounge, with personalised care and support alongside shared care (for example in relation to overnight support).
- D. 'Step down' supported housing, particularly for younger people.
- E. In the majority of cases we would expect people to rent their homes and be tenants; in some cases access to home ownership, such as through the Home Ownership for people with Long Term Disabilities (HOLD) scheme⁷, may be appropriate. The councils and their NHS partners will seek to identify people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who may benefit from the HOLD option and housing providers that are willing and able to deliver this option.
- F. Other housing that may be relevant to some people with people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, such as extra care housing and co-housing.
- G. In a minority of cases, shared supported housing where a person has a room (which may have an ensuite shower/bathroom) and shares the other facilities with other residents.
- H. Short term 'crisis' supported housing, for example to facilitate inpatient admission avoidance.

Housing option D and H are important as they may be used to facilitate short term housing needs and/or 'transitions' between different accommodation/housing options.

To access any form of housing and supported housing people should be:

- Registered with the local authority responsible for housing so their housing need is formally recorded and recognised. This may require a degree of flexibility in relation to local connection policies as some people with learning disabilities and/or Autism may need to live in an area that is different to where they currently live or originally came from.
- Assessed by the relevant local authority and the NHS in order that appropriate care and support can be commissioned and provided.

To facilitate this housing pathway, particularly for people who are in inpatient settings, it is recognised by the councils and their NHS partners that through this strategy:

- There is a need to develop a smoother pathway and encourage a multi-agency approach for people who are inpatients and identified as being clinically ready for discharge. This will be guided by the NHS England *Brick by Brick*⁸ report.
- There is a need to meet the accommodation needs of the most challenging groups to house, for example people with forensic needs. This may require consideration of the needs of individuals to live in areas where, for example, they may not have a local connection.

⁷ <https://www.ownyourhome.gov.uk/scheme/hold/>

⁸ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/brick-by-brick/>

- In relation to people who are on the discharge pathway and do not have a home to return, the councils will seek to prioritise people in these circumstances within each authority's homelessness policy in a consistent way.
- The councils and their NHS partners will seek to develop specialist housing advice and advocacy for people to assist in understanding and navigating the housing options available to them.

6. Supporting and facilitating the housing market

The local authority commissioners want to strengthen their relationships with housing providers, particularly Registered Providers in the North West, who wish to collaborate with us to help fulfil our strategic ambitions:

- Widening the housing choices for people with a learning disability and autistic people and improving the quality of housing available, especially by improving the supply of supported housing and general needs housing.
- Promoting a coherent approach between local provision of housing, care and health as an integrated system.
- Commissioning and facilitating support for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to rent or buy their own home.
- Considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people in relation to housing; actively drawing attention to sensory considerations that can be made to an environment to improve the sensory experiences and wellbeing of autistic people.

Our approach to working closely with a range of providers of housing and supported housing is set out below.

Access to general needs housing

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside are seeking to work with housing providers to secure increased access to general needs housing, both in the social housing sector and private rented sector (recognising that there are different housing benefit implications of these approaches), for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. This involves working directly with Registered Providers and through councils' Housing Options Strategies.

This may be an option for people who no longer need to live in a supported housing setting and/or for people who don't need supported housing in the first instance. We are keen to avoid an assumption that supported housing is the 'default' housing option.

We are aware that there is considerable demand in many areas for social rent and affordable rent general needs social housing and that in some areas the private rented sector is not affordable.

We are also aware that access routes into general needs social housing, such as choice based lettings systems, too often don't enable people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to have fair access or quick access, where this may be necessary. The councils will seek to ensure that choice based lettings systems recognise that people may require reasonable adjustments linked to their sensory or physical needs and support needs to be recognised in the application process.

We know from discussion with housing providers that there is an opportunity to work together and collaborate with them and with councils' housing options teams, to identify and secure additional opportunities for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to have improved access to general needs social housing and housing in the private rented sector .

Developing supported housing

The councils recognise the need for housing providers to have long term funding confidence, particularly when investing in supported housing.

Local authority commissioners will collaborate with ICS commissioners on joint opportunities to deliver new schemes and review existing provision reflecting a cohort of people who have jointly funded care and health services.

We are seeking innovative approaches from our housing partners, for example, delivering a range of housing sizes, types and tenures, including potentially remodelling existing supported housing, that will be appropriate to the needs of various groups in the community, in line with our strategic aims.

When working with housing providers and care and support providers the local authority partners would like:

- To be involved at an early stage in considerations and discussions regarding the reconfiguration or disposal of existing supported housing provision.
- To agree priority notification/nomination rights on existing and new supported housing. This may include developing local lettings and allocations policies for specialist and supported housing schemes to manage allocations and make best use of the resources.
- To understand whether you own and/or lease housing for the purposes of providing supported housing and to understand your funding model. Where housing is leased we want to be satisfied that this model is sustainable and in the interests of the intended residents.
- In response to our commissioning intentions/plans, we are seeking providers to develop proposals for housing and supported housing which are effectively tailored to meet local need and to consult with us and relevant professionals prior to and during the implementation of these proposals.
- In response to our commissioning intentions/plans, supported housing providers who are not currently operating in the Cheshire and Merseyside area to get in touch with us and talk through their plans for development of supported or specialist housing so we can advise on what our needs are and how you might be able to meet them.

The councils with their NHS partners will seek to work with a range of capital funding partners to deliver this strategy, including Homes England and NHS England. Where possible, we will also seek to use local authority and NHS resources, such as land and buildings, to facilitate the development of housing and supported housing.

The councils with their NHS partners will undertake ongoing market engagement to:

- Build strong relationships with housing and supported housing providers.
- Stimulate and encourage the local supported housing market.
- Work with housing and supported housing providers in a collaborative way.
- Understand how we can work with supported housing providers to jointly manage market risks and challenges.

The councils will work closely with providers of residential care services to understand the long term need for residential services and where appropriate, work with providers to:

- Maximise the opportunities for people living currently in residential care to move to housing based alternatives with personalised care and support.
- Work with organisations that provide residential care services who are interested in opportunities to transition to the provision of housing based alternatives with personalised care and support.

7. Ensuring the quality of housing and support

The councils and their NHS partners want to ensure that all supported housing services are of good quality. This means both the accommodation and the care and support services (as applicable) being of good quality.

This will include supported housing providers and care providers meeting legislative and regulatory requirements as appropriate (Charity Commission, Regulator of Social Housing, the Care Quality Commission and Community Interest Companies regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority).

The councils will draw on the Government's guidance *National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing*⁹ as a basis for expectations of supported housing providers in terms of contemporary practice in the delivery and management of accommodation with support services.

The councils' approach to ensuring that supported housing is of a good quality anticipates the intent of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.¹⁰ The councils anticipate that their approach to ensuring the quality of accommodation with support services will likely include:

- A licensing scheme for all supported housing providers. The licensing scheme will be developed by all the councils. All providers of supported housing in Cheshire and Merseyside will be required to be licensed by the relevant local authority in order to provide supported housing.
- Only providers of supported housing that are licensed by the councils will be able to access specified and exempt accommodation housing benefit status.
- The councils will also review the quality of the provision of support/care in supported housing services to ensure customers are getting the support they need and require.
- Assessment of the value for money provided by supported housing services, ensuring they are affordable for the councils and for the people who live in them.

In the meantime, before the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act is implemented, the councils will draw on the evidence and learning from the Government's Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)¹¹ to working with providers of supported housing services to ensure that both the quality of accommodation used for supported housing and the support services provided are of a good quality.

⁹ [Supported housing: national statement of expectations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684242/Supported_housing_national_statement_of_expectations.pdf)

¹⁰ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023 publications - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](https://www.parliament.uk/business/bills/publications/2023/Supported_Housing_Regulatory_Oversight_Act_2023_publications)

¹¹ [Supported Housing Improvement Programme prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684242/Supported_housing_improvement_programme_prospectus.pdf)

8. Delivery of this strategy

The councils will work jointly, focussed on enabling the development of and access to housing and support options across Cheshire and Merseyside to meet identified need.

The councils will work in partnership with Registered Providers and other housing developers/providers to develop specialist and supported housing to meet the needs of local people identified in this strategy.

Our summary action plan to deliver this strategy is at Annexe 1.

The councils with their NHS partners are committed to working alongside people who need housing and supported housing identified in this strategy. We aim to:

- Co-produce with a range of people with lived experience the commissioning of housing/supported housing services, and
- Work with people with lived experience in relation to managing the quality of supported housing and measuring the impact it has on people's lives.

This strategy is part of a dialogue with the organisations and individuals that are interested in delivering housing and supported housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

If you want to find out more or have a discussion about any aspect of developing housing/supported housing to meet the needs identified in this strategy, please get in touch with us:

Email: [insert]

Phone: [insert]

Write: [insert]

Annexe 1 Delivery plan

Introduction

This implementation plan sets out the suggested actions and approaches to be taken by the Cheshire & Merseyside Councils and their partners to deliver the *Housing strategy: people with learning disabilities and/or Autism 2024-2030*.

Responsibility is identified in terms of 'place', i.e., at individual local authority level or at Cheshire & Merseyside level.

Timescales have been left to be completed by the Cheshire & Merseyside councils and their NHS partners.

Addressing the need for additional mainstream, general needs housing

Increasing the provision of, predominantly, 1-bedroom self contained housing to rent in the social housing sector and private rented sector can help to both mitigate the need for supported housing (with floating support as necessary) as well as enabling the most effective use of supported housing in terms of facilitating appropriate move on to general needs housing, including for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who don't need/no longer need supported housing.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	<p>Given the overall level of demand for affordable general needs housing, this is likely to require a level of strategic intervention by Councils to generate more affordable housing to rent for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct provision by Councils with retained housing stock • Leasing from private landlords. • Working with local Registered Providers to meet the wider housing need as identified in this strategy, including using existing stock where appropriate. • Supported housing providers developing and/or procuring additional move on accommodation. 	Place	
2	<p>Review the use and suitability of Choice Based Lettings for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there is a role for 'sensitive' lettings and use of local lettings plans to enable some people with learning disabilities and/or Autism to access general needs social housing. • To recognise and take account of the adaptations for people who may have sensory environmental needs. 	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3	Determine the level of floating support services and similar community support services (e.g. KeyRing type models) required to support people living in general needs housing.	Place	
4	Councils to consider planning policy and delivery mechanisms to support the delivery of more 1 bed dwellings as part of the housing development mix	Place	

Commissioning and delivering housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale																						
1	Review the use of shared supported housing. Identify shared supported housing that is no longer fit for purpose and requires replacement with other housing options for residents.	Place																							
2	<p>Identify and commission new supported housing that is required to meet identified need drawing on good practice from the region and from elsewhere. Targets over the period to 2032/33</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Local authority</th> <th>Need for Supported Housing by 2032/33</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>160</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cheshire West & Chester</td> <td>261</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Halton</td> <td>189</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Knowsley</td> <td>152</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Liverpool</td> <td>104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Helens</td> <td>160</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sefton</td> <td>246</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Warrington</td> <td>148</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wirral</td> <td>259</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)</td> <td>1,679</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Local authority	Need for Supported Housing by 2032/33	Cheshire East	160	Cheshire West & Chester	261	Halton	189	Knowsley	152	Liverpool	104	St Helens	160	Sefton	246	Warrington	148	Wirral	259	Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679	Place	
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3	<p>Increase the number of Shared Lives carers who can support people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. Targets over the period to 2032/33</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Local authority</th> <th>Need for Shared Lives 2032/33</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cheshire East</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Local authority	Need for Shared Lives 2032/33	Cheshire East	16	Place																			
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	Action		Responsibility	Timescale
	Cheshire West & Chester	26		
	Halton	19		
	Knowsley	15		
	Liverpool	10		
	St Helens	16		
	Sefton	24		
	Warrington	15		
	Wirral	26		
	Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	167		
4	<p>Housing/supported housing for current inpatients and people who maybe at risk of inpatient admission:</p> <p>Identify and commission the housing required by people currently living in inpatient settings.</p> <p>As part of commissioning this housing, develop accommodation with design features and services that will support people outside of hospital and reduce admissions to acute services.</p> <p>Where appropriate, for some people leaving inpatient settings, it will be necessary to ensure that their housing/supported housing is consistent with any restrictions linked to Court of Protection Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and/or Ministry of Justice requirements.</p> <p>Where people are at risk of losing their current accommodation on being admitted to an acute hospital setting, the councils will work with housing and accommodation providers, as part of their homelessness prevention activities, to try to ensure that people do not lose their housing at point of admission.</p> <p>Where people are already in an acute setting and they are on a pathway to clinical discharge, the councils and their NHS partners will collaborate in relation to the Duty to Refer arrangements where a person may be at risk of homelessness if the housing/supported housing</p>		<p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p> <p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p> <p>Place/NHS</p> <p>Place/NHS</p> <p>Place/NHS</p>	

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	<p>they need is unavailable.</p> <p>The councils and their NHS partners, if necessary to meet need, will jointly commission specialist short term 'step down/step through' accommodation to support people out of hospital settings whilst their long term housing is being arranged/developed. This facility may also support people living in the community but who may be at risk of inpatient admission in their current accommodation setting.</p> <p>Where housing and support/care provision is required to meet very specialist need/s, develop agreements in relation to joint funding and commissioning for these specialist services.</p>	<p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p> <p>Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS</p>	
5	Identify people for whom home ownership through the HOLD programme is a potential options and identify a Registered Provider partner/s to work with to deliver this housing option (Home Ownership for people with Long – term Disabilities).	Place	
6	Make best use of existing and future development of extra care housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
7	Consider utilising Councils' and NHS surplus land and property to support the delivery of supported and specialist housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
8	Councils to have oversight of all sites and planning applications for specialist/supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.	Place	
9	Put in place arrangements to deliver these housing and supported housing requirements with a range of partners including Health and Social Care Commissioners, Housing Providers, Homes England, and NHS England.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
10	The councils will aim to ensure that Local Plans incorporate the need for specialist and supported housing and that these housing needs are part of local housing strategies and planning policies.	Place	
11	The councils and their NHS partners will update the assessment of need for housing and supported housing	Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	on a regular basis. The assessment will include evidence of young people (from school year 9) who may transition to eligibility for adult social care at 18 years and who may need housing/supported housing.		
12	Put in place arrangements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produce with a range of people with lived experience the commissioning of housing/supported housing services, and • Work with people with lived experience in relation to managing the quality of supported housing and measuring the impact it has on people's lives. 	Place	

Quality assurance framework for supported housing commissioned by the Councils which measures the benefits and impact for people using supported housing as well as value for money

To deliver the proposed approach to supported housing quality assurance as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Identify all supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism that has the housing benefit status of 'specified accommodation' including the categories of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exempt accommodation • Managed properties 	Place	
2	Develop a shared set of quality assessment and assurance criteria, that demonstrates the Councils' expectations for specialist and supported housing including value for money. This should cover both support services and accommodation standards drawing on the learning from the Supported Housing Improvement Project to date (for example in St Helens), the National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing, Building the Right Home and Building the Right Support, as well as any locally specific factors. Draw on in-house contractual and performance management standards and procedures that apply to existing supported housing.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3	In anticipation of the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, bring together a group of Council colleagues from revenues and benefits, adult social care (including safeguarding expertise), housing standards (environmental health/private sector housing standards), children's services (in relation to vulnerable young people) and planning and housing to consider a shared approach to licensing supported housing (including for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism) and the implementation of supported housing quality standards.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
4	Through this group (above) risk assess existing supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism in terms of either known or likely risk/s in relation to poor quality support and/or accommodation.	Place	

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
5	The Councils to engage with supported housing providers in planning for the implementation of the Supported Housing Act and assess the risk of providers potentially withdrawing from the market and Councils' responses to this.	Place	

Facilitate the supported housing market to encourage the delivery of a wide range of supported housing options that meet identified need.

To deliver the proposed approach to facilitating the supported housing market as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Hold a 'launch' event for the housing strategy with housing providers and care and support providers.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	
2	Hold meetings with a range of housing providers, including the largest social housing providers, in the Cheshire & Merseyside region to discuss/agree how they can contribute to and support the delivery of the housing strategy, both in relation to supported housing and access to general needs housing.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
3	Meet with representatives of the private rented sector in Cheshire/Merseyside to discuss/agree how they can contribute to and support the delivery of the housing strategy	Place	
4	Establish a learning disability supported housing provider forum/fora that will meet regularly with Council Officers to discuss supported housing development and operational practice issues.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
5	Identify gaps in the supported housing provider market (in terms of capability and capacity) and approach potential providers from outside of Cheshire/Merseyside to encourage new 'entrants' into the local supported housing market.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	

Funding of supported housing development

To deliver the proposed approach as set out in the housing strategy, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Maximise the use of a wide range of potential capital funding sources for supported housing development including:	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the proposed engagement with supported housing providers and other Registered Providers to maximise capital investment that they can bring to the development of the supported housing required. 	Place	
1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to develop a strategic relationship with NHS England and with Homes England to maximise investment from, respectively, the NHS capital programme and the Affordable Homes Programme in supported housing, including consideration/discussion of grant rates for supported/specialist housing. 	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the potential for supported and adapted housing to form part of the affordable housing contribution on larger development sites, including in relation to s.106 agreements. 	Place	
1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage RPs to engage with NHS England about using the NHS capital grant funding to develop the most specialist forms of housing 	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside/NHS	
1e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree with ICS partners the most effective use of the Better Care Fund to support delivery of the housing strategy. 	Place	
1f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital funding from Councils (subject to appropriate business cases). 	Place	

Governance and decision-making

To deliver the proposed approach as set out in the housing strategy, ensuring that the Councils have the necessary governance and decision-making structures in place to facilitate a coordinated approach to commissioning, funding and reviewing supported housing, the following actions are proposed.

Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Develop a Cheshire and Merseyside Learning Disability Strategic Housing Delivery Group, with appropriate representation from the Councils, as the regional steering/decision making group for housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. Ensure the membership also includes representatives from relevant external partners, e.g. the NHS/ICS and housing providers.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	
2	Establish reporting arrangements into this Group to oversee the delivery of the housing strategy.	Place/Cheshire & Merseyside	

Annexe 2 National and local context

There are a number of local and national policies that affect the supported housing sector and which will influence the delivery of this strategy in terms of the types of housing and supported housing that are commissioned and developed.

Housing and care and support providers should ensure they are aware of and take account of these local and national policies in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

Local context

Cheshire East

The *Learning Disability Strategy 2019-2022 (My life My Choice)*¹² identifies the Council's intentions are to:

- Work with local housing and social care providers to provide a range of housing and care options for people to choose from. This includes adapting their current home, living alone with support, living with a small number of people in shared housing, or moving outside their local area only if they want to or if it's necessary to meet their needs.
- Collect resources to help councils transform the local housing offer for people with a learning disability or autistic people.
- Reduce the number of people in permanent residential settings and supporting them to live in the community
- Develop a plan for children and young people in residential settings to return to their family home or move to greater independence
- Work with partners to ensure appropriate housing options and support are available

Cheshire West and Chester

The aims of the *Cheshire West Place Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy for Adults with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism 2021-2025*¹³ are that:

- More people with learning disabilities and/or Autism will be supported to live a good quality and meaningful life

¹² [Cheshire East Council My Life, My Choice: A Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities in Cheshire East 2019-2022.](#)

¹³ [Cheshire West Place Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability and/or Autism 2021 - 2025](#)

Housing strategy: people with learning disabilities and autistic people

- People with a learning disability and/or autism will be supported to live, work, socialise and be as independent as possible throughout their life, within the local community, close to family, and friends.
- Support for people with a learning disability and/or autism will be person-centered and effective to help ensure that they can achieve their goals, aspirations, and person-centered outcomes.
- People with a learning disability and / or autism and their carers can access the appropriate level of information and advice when they need it.
- People with a learning disability and/or autism feel safe in their Community

Halton

Halton's Market Position Statement 2023-2026¹⁴ identifies that:

"It is anticipated the number of 'own front door' schemes will increase, as demand for this housing option is high as it provides individuals with their own self-contained accommodation but within a wider, safe and supported environment. Discussions are currently taking place for another 'own front door' scheme in Runcorn to provide a further 10 individual tenancies.

We will also look at opportunities for core and cluster developments as demand shifts for individuals with more complex needs from shared supported tenancies to individual tenancies."

Knowsley

Through the *2022-2026 ASC Market Position Statement*¹⁵, the Council is seeking to work with and encourage a range of providers to support people with learning disabilities – it is encouraging a mixed market of providers who can deliver personalised support and accommodation. The Council will be particularly focusing on encouraging small and local providers to enter the market.

Liverpool

¹⁴ <https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/files/market-position-statements/Halton-Adult-Social-Care-Market-Position-Statement-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁵ [Knowsley Council: Market Position Statement 2022-2026](#)

Housing strategy: people with learning disabilities and autistic people

The *Liverpool 2020-25 Market Position Statement*¹⁶ sets out the intention to develop a minimum of 400 independent homes with support for adults with learning disabilities and other people, by 2025. It states "All adults with learning disabilities should have the opportunity to live as independently as they are able to, within their own tenancies or accommodation where possible with packages of care that they have full control over and that meet their individual needs, supporting them at different ages and stages of life to live full lives".

Sefton

The *Sefton 2019/20 Market Position Statement*¹⁷ states "All existing and new accommodation needs to reflect the increasing incidence of physical disability and mobility difficulties amongst those with learning disabilities and appropriate sensory adaptations undertaken for individuals with Autism. It states "Adults with learning disabilities will be supported to be as independent as possible. Primary consideration is for people to be offered excellent care at home supported within their own communities. If a higher level of care is required, then alternatives such as extra care schemes should be available and lower-level supported housing services such as KeyRing type schemes."

St Helens

The *People's Plan 2021-2026*¹⁸ has an objective to expand and improve mental health services and services for people with a learning disability and/or autism. The Adult Social Care Integrated Commissioning Strategy 2022-2024¹⁹, identifies that:

"By September 2023, we will have a costed housing and support plan that delivers a suitable range of housing options for the next five years, in partnership with a preferred housing provider."

Warrington

The *2021 Learning Disability Strategy*²⁰ seeks to provide a range of appropriate and quality housing options that allow individuals to choose a home that meets their changing needs. The strategy also aims to promote independence, choice and control for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. The council will annually review the Warrington Housing Strategy (2018-28) to ensure appropriate housing is delivered locally, and it will ensure the commission of appropriate, supported housing provision to meet local need.

¹⁶ [Liverpool City Council: Market Position Statement: Adult Social Care and Homelessness 2020 - 2025](#)

¹⁷ [Sefton Council: Adult Social Care Market Position Statement](#)

¹⁸ [St Helens Council: St Helens People's Plan 2021-2026](#)

¹⁹ https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/5892/P2-ASC-Integrated-Commissioning-Strategy/pdf/P2_Adult_social_care_IC_strategy.pdf?m=638170897815870000

²⁰ [Warrington Borough Council: Learning Disability Strategy](#)

Wirral

The *Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Autism strategy 2022-2027*²¹ reflects the NHS Long Term Plan and the Transforming Care programme, which aim to improve and widen access to mental health support, reduce health inequalities, and provide community-based care for autistic people and those with intellectual disabilities. It also aims to:

- Support more autistic people to live in the community, with the right support, and close to home
- Working with partners to ensure appropriate housing options and support are available
- Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- Reducing reliance on specialist hospitals and inpatient care

National context

There are a range of national policies that will influence how the Cheshire and Merseyside councils commission and regulate supported housing, including for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

In October 2020 the Government published the *Supported housing: national statement of expectations*.²² This set out the expectations of councils and of providers of supported housing in relation to, for example, understanding the need for supported housing and ensuring that supported housing is of a good quality, both in terms of the accommodation and the service. This was for guidance only, however since this was published, the Government has set out its intention to deliver improvements in supported housing the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act (below).

More recently the Government has established the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)²³ and made available funding to a number of Councils to deliver this programme locally, including in Cheshire and Merseyside (St Helen's Borough Council). The programme is intended to support Councils to improve the quality of supported housing, both the accommodation and support services, through greater local scrutiny.

The recent Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act²⁴ makes provision for the regulation of supported exempt accommodation, and makes provision for local authority oversight of, and enforcement powers relating to, the provision of supported exempt accommodation. It is expected that Councils will have new statutory powers and duties to regulate supported housing locally. The Act provides new powers to councils in relation to:

²¹ [NHS Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Autism Strategy 2022 – 2027](#)

²² [Supported housing: national statement of expectations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²³ [Supported Housing Improvement Programme prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁴ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

Housing strategy: people with learning disabilities and autistic people

- A licensing scheme for providers of supported housing.
- Producing local assessments of need for supported housing and developing strategic plans based on that evidence.

The Act also sets that there will be new National Supported Housing Standards that will apply to providers of supported housing and councils' role in checking these standards are being met.

This will mean that all supported housing that is developed for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism where it falls within the definition of 'supported exempt accommodation' (which is likely to be the majority of housing developed through this strategy) will be subject in the future to regulation by the Cheshire and Merseyside councils, including licensing housing providers to permit them to develop and operate supported housing.

Over recent years long lease-based models of supported housing have come under scrutiny by the Regulator of Social Housing, particularly the governance and financial arrangements of some Registered Providers that lease all or most of their supported housing stock from other organisations. The Cheshire and Merseyside councils will take account of the regulatory status of providers of supported housing in its approach to managing the quality of supported housing services, including in relation to housing providers' access to higher rates of housing benefit

In addition there is a range of national policy and practice that housing and support providers should be aware of in relation to developing housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

The *Building the Right Support Action Plan*²⁵, published in 2022, updates the original *Building the Right Support*²⁶ from 2015, reinforces the importance of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism having a good home.

*Building the Right Home*²⁷ sets out guidance and principles for housing for people with a learning disability and autistic people that need specialist and supported housing.

The Care Quality Commission's Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture (RSRRC)²⁸ published in 2018 sets out more clearly than in any previous CQC guidance what the specific expectations are of care providers both in terms of registration of supported housing services and inspection. As well as meeting the standard CQC regulations that apply to care providers there is an explicit focus on the service model, i.e. the model of care. This is influenced by the *Service model for commissioners of health and social care services*²⁹. This

²⁵ [Building the Right Support for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People Action Plan - July 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁶ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right support](#)

²⁷ [NHS England/LGA/ADASS: Building the right home](#)

²⁸ [Right support right care right culture \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)

²⁹ Supporting people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition. (2015). LGA/ADASS/NHSE

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sets out 9 principles that commissioners should apply in commissioning and contracting for services for people with learning disabilities, and by implication, that care providers will need to deliver. CQC emphasises that it expects providers to comply with the guidance in *Building the Right Support*. In addition, in RSRCRC, CQC is clear about its other requirements and expectations of care providers, specifically:

- Providers need to be able to evidence that there is a need for a service, in this case supported housing, and that local commissioners have agreed to the service being developed.
- Providers need to be able to show that the size, setting and design of the service (this means the setting as well as the design of the care service) meets peoples' expectations and is aligned with current best practice.
- The service needs to enable people to have access to their local community. The care model and the location of the service mean that people are supported to access ordinary community life in response to their needs and wishes.
- Providers need to be able to evidence that the model of care and the associated policies and procedures are in line with best practice. This is reinforcing that CQC expects providers to avoid care practices that are reliant on restrictive practices or seclusion and instead are focussed on promoting people's strengths.

All housing and supported housing services which provide CQC regulated care, developed through this strategy, will need to be consistent with *Building the Right Support* and *RSRCRC*.

Annexe 3 Examples of contemporary practice in housing and support for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism

We have identified a range of contemporary practice examples in relation to the design of housing and support that reflects the needs of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with care and support needs, including the need for a range of housing adaptations and the creation of trauma informed environments for some people.

Review of existing shared supported housing services

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside are seeking to work with housing and support providers to review existing supported housing services, particularly 'shared' supported housing services (i.e. where a person has a room in a house and shares the communal areas with other tenants).

We have identified an over supply of shared housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism across Cheshire and Merseyside, particularly small scale shared housing with 24/7 support. Problems with this type of supported housing include:

- Properties that are no longer fit for purpose, e.g. they may not be accessible.
- Relatively high void rates and prevalence of long term voids.
- A reducing preference for shared types of housing amongst people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, for example in relation to compatibility issues including issues regarding young people sharing with older people. However, Some recent consultation outcomes with young persons indicate that they are more inclined to be comfortable with the principle of a shared property with fellow young people as a step-up to independence and preparing for them moving on to independent homes.
- Poor value for money.

However, we are also aware that through some recent consultation with young persons, some people are more inclined to be comfortable with the principle of living in a shared property with fellow young people as a step-up to independence and preparing for them moving on to independent homes

We know from discussions with housing providers that there is an opportunity to review their existing portfolios of shared supported housing.

As a guide, we have provided some examples of councils that have worked with supported housing providers to review and in some cases reconfigure or decommission existing supported housing to address these types of issues.

These reviews have typically involved:

- A review of the long term suitability of the properties as supported housing.

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- Consideration of costs to adapt and modify properties and whether this is feasible and realistic.
- Undertaking up to date care assessments of tenants, including by trusted assessors from care providers.
- Discussions with tenants, advocates and families about alternative housing options.
- Identification of housing options that reflect tenants' needs and that will better suit people's needs in the longer term.
- Commissioning and development of alternative housing options.

Oxfordshire County Council. Shared supported housing services were developed as an alternative to residential care in the 1990s and 2000s. This had become the default housing option for many people with learning disabilities. The County Council with its NHS and housing partners, undertook a strategic review of the portfolio of shared supported housing and at the same time has been developing a wide range of new build supported housing and extra care housing services, alongside supported housing options for people with the most complex support needs. This has resulted in a wider range of housing options being available for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism with shared supported housing no longer being the predominant housing model.

Worcestershire County Council. Since 2015, the County Council has had a programme of developing new build supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism which has resulted in over 400 new homes being developed. These have been developed in partnership with a range of housing providers including large Registered Providers and smaller, specialised housing providers. This has included supported housing options for people with moderate support needs (not requiring 24/7 support) as well as people with complex support needs who need bespoke supports including 24/7 support. This housing development programme has meant that fewer people have moved to shared supported housing, as most new development has been of self-contained dwellings, and some people have been able to move from shared supported housing and residential care, into new self-contained supported housing.

New supported housing development

Commissioners across Cheshire and Merseyside have commissioned a range of high quality housing and supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, including people with complex support needs.

There is identified need for additional types of self-contained supported housing that meet the housing and support needs of a range of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

As a guide to the types of future housing development, we have provided examples locally and from elsewhere of housing and supported housing that is effective in meeting the needs

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of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, including people with complex support needs.

An example of new build accommodation for people with learning disabilities is Anvil Court³⁰ a scheme in Hampshire directly developed, financed and owned by Hampshire County Council. It is a block of 10 1-bed flats with an additional 3 wheelchair adapted bungalows. This supported housing scheme has 24/7 care on site and is aimed at people with learning disabilities with a range of care and support needs.



In relation to people with very complex support needs an example of a bespoke supported housing scheme has been developed by Choice Support³¹ in Kirklees with capital funding from NHS England. This is an example of a supported housing scheme, including 6 self-contained units with staff facilities, designed for people with complex needs which includes features such as curved (and removable) internal walls, and soft impact finishes to floors and walls.

³⁰ <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/adultservices/Extra-Care-Younger-adults-Brochure-2020.pdf>

³¹ <https://www.choicesupport.org.uk/stories/transforming-care-mayman-lane>



Oxfordshire County Council has commissioned two purpose-built supported housing schemes for people with complex needs³². These have been directly developed and are managed by Cherwell District Council. Each scheme has 6 self-contained units and is designed for people with an autism diagnosis who require specialist accommodation and support and they are intended for people with complex support needs who find it difficult to share support or accommodation.



Karbon Homes' development of five supported two-bed bungalows in Walker, Newcastle are designed specifically for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. The kitchen of each bungalow leads on to a private patio area with bedrooms on the most private and quietest side of the buildings. Externally, the layout includes secure external gardens and allotment areas with the bungalows positioned as far as possible from any noise in the parking area and access road.

³²https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Practice_examples/Housing_LIN_case_studies/HLIN_CaseStudy_151_Oxfordshire.pdf



Access to general needs housing

As a guide, we have provided examples of councils and housing providers that have worked with housing providers and other organisations to improve access to general needs housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

ForHousing has designated a block of general needs social housing in Salford for use by people with learning disabilities. This is creating both 'low level' supported housing and 'move on' housing for people who no longer need to live in supported housing where higher levels of care and support are provided. This is making general needs social housing available to people with learning disabilities and/or Autism who need a self-contained home that is managed in a sensitive way by a social landlord.

Golden Lane Housing (GLH) is a Registered Provider (of social housing) and a charity that specialises in providing housing for people with learning disabilities. GLH operates a scheme that it refers to as 'Great Tenants'. This is a scheme where GLH takes out a lease on a privately owned property that will meet the housing needs of a person with learning disabilities/autistic person (or a group of people). GLH 'vets' private landlords and their properties to ensure that they are compliant with relevant standards (such as having gas and electrical safety certificates and appropriate smoke and carbon monoxide alarms) and then acts as the landlord to the tenant/s (which also helps to resolve any housing benefit related issues). GLH typically takes out leases of up to seven years with private landlords; whilst it does not provide permanent housing, it is often a medium to long term housing option which, in effect, turns a private sector let into a social housing let (typically as a form of supported housing).

https://www.glh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/GLH_GT-for-professionals.pdf

Annexe 4 Need for housing and supported housing

The estimated need for housing and supported housing is based on evidence from:

- Work undertaken by Campbell Tickell for Cheshire & Merseyside ADASS in 2022.
- Qualitative evidence from commissioners from the councils in Cheshire & Merseyside.

Quantitative evidence of need

Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership commissioned Campbell Tickell in 2002 to undertake an assessment of the need for 'future accommodation with support needs' over the 10 year period from 2023 to 2033.

This assessment identifies need for 'accommodation with support needs' to 2033 for each of the nine councils and at Cheshire & Merseyside level. Based on the report from Campbell Tickell, 'Accommodation with support needs' is taken to mean 'supported housing'.

The Cambell Tickell needs assessment for supported housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism is focused on those individuals who are inpatients or at high risk of inpatient admission and/or those who are eligible for adult social care services. The cohorts are:

- Inpatients in hospital or specialist units.
- Those on the Dynamic Support Databases who are high risk.
- Residents in care homes.
- Young people who are transitioning to adult services.
- People living with a family carer.

The method used estimates future need for 'accommodation with support needs' net of 'relets' within existing supported housing services.

Tabel 1 shows the estimated level of need for supported housing for each local authority and for Cheshire & Merseyside to 2033.

The table below shows that a total of 1,679 supported housing units will be required across Cheshire & Merseyside over the next 10 years to meet the needs that have been identified (including some adjustments to take account of the projected learning disability population). This is an indicative number of units and the actual number required could vary upwards or downwards, depending on the number of relets and other factors (Cambell Tickell, 2022).

In addition there are 54 'patients' in hospital settings who are NHS 'Specialised Commissioning Patients'.

Table 1. Estimated need for supported housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Supported housing 2032/33
Cheshire East	160
Cheshire West & Chester	261
Halton	189
Knowsley	152
Liverpool	104
St Helens	160
Sefton	246
Warrington	148
Wirral	259
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	1,679

Source: Campbell Tickell, 2022

It is possible that some of this estimated need for supported housing could be met through the use of Shared Lives accommodation. Based on work undertaken by the Housing LIN with other councils to estimate need for different types of housing and accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, it is assumed that approximately 10% of the identified need for supported housing could be met through the provision of Shared Lives accommodation. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.165 additional Shared Lives places over the period to 2032/33.

It was outside the scope of the assessment undertaken by Cambell Tickell to estimate the need for mainstream 'general needs' housing amongst people with learning disabilities and/or Autism. However, the assessment by Cambell Tickell did identify/estimate the level of 'relets' within supported housing as being 7% per annum, which identified an overall level of relets within supported housing services across all councils of c.190 per annum (shown at Campbell Tickell report in table at paragraph 6.2.12).

Based on work undertaken by the Housing LIN with other councils to estimate need for different types of housing and accommodation for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism, it is assumed that approximately 20% of relets may relate to a need for general needs housing. This is shown in table 2. This suggests a need for c.380 additional general needs housing units over the period to 2032/33.

It should be noted that the estimated need for additional Shared Lives accommodation would reduce the estimated need for supported housing over the period to 2032/33.

Table 2. Estimated need for Shared Lives and general needs housing to 2032/33

Local authority	Need for Shared Lives 2032/33	Need for general needs housing 2032/22
Cheshire East	16	58
Cheshire West & Chester	26	58
Halton	19	12
Knowsley	15	30
Liverpool	10	108
St Helens	16	28
Sefton	24	16
Warrington	15	26
Wirral	26	46
Total (Cheshire & Merseyside)	167	382

Qualitative evidence of need

Qualitative evidence of need has been derived from insights and evidence from commissioners about local trends and the nature of future need for supported housing and housing in their area for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.

This is summarised below in relation to different 'cohorts' of people and their circumstances from evidence from all nine councils.

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
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Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
People living with family carers/informal carers	<p>Trends are mixed. Some councils (LAs) have seen an increase in numbers of adults aged 18 moving away from a family setting, and/or support of informal carers, into supported housing with care services. However, other LAs have continued to see informal carers providing a home and care and support for their family member with learning disabilities/autism.</p> <p>For those informal carers who do wish to retain their caring responsibilities, LAs recognise the need to provide support to those carers in order for this to be sustainable.</p> <p>To support these carers there is a need for provision of additional respite accommodation.</p> <p>Most LAs are experiencing older carers being concerned about what will happen to their family member if they are no longer able to care for them.</p> <p>Some LAs are seeing fewer older carers who are retaining caring responsibilities, into older age. LAs recognise that there is a need to plan with older carers to avoid crisis situations from arising, for example where there may be a cohort of people who are aged 50+ living with older family carers who will need a range of housing options to move to over the next 5-10 years.</p>
Young people in transition to adult social care eligibility	<p>Many LAs are experiencing increasing numbers of young people in transition to eligibility for adult social care who will need housing, including supported housing. Trends amongst this cohort include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater complexity of support needs • More people who have needs linked to autism
People living in Shared Lives	<p>Some LAs have identified modest increases in need for Shared Lives accommodation.</p> <p>Some LAs have plans to either maintain current capacity or develop and grow their Shared Lives services.</p>
People living in residential care	<p>All LAs have seen a reduction in the number of people with learning disabilities and/or Autism living in residential care. This reflects people moving to supported housing, extra care housing and Shared Lives instead of residential care.</p> <p>Some LAs are also identifying people who are currently living in residential care who may benefit from a move to supported housing.</p> <p>LAs are now only developing or funding residential care models for those individuals with the most complex needs.</p>

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
People living in nursing care	<p>The majority of LAs have very small numbers of people placed in a nursing setting.</p> <p>In some instances NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) teams and Integrated Care Board (ICB) partners commission these services.</p> <p>LAs are not seeing individuals with learning disabilities and autistic people requiring general nursing care at an older age.</p>
People living in hospital settings	<p>There are relatively low numbers of people in hospital settings/assessment and treatment beds.</p> <p>LAs recognise that some people moving from hospital require larger and/or adapted properties to meet their needs.</p> <p>LAs are working with their NHS partners to support discharges from these acute settings for people to return to community based accommodation.</p> <p>LAs also recognise that there are also people who are in community settings or other forms of accommodation settings who also need very robust specialist accommodation.</p>
People living in shared supported housing	<p>Most LAs are seeing some evidence of decreasing demand for the use of shared supported housing, particularly amongst younger people.</p> <p>However, LAs recognise that there is an ongoing role for shared supported housing and that for some people this works well, for example, where people are very settled and/or would be at risk of potential social isolation in self-contained housing.</p> <p>Some LAs are actively looking to decommission some shared supported housing services, particularly where there are 'matching' and compatibility issues, that are creating long term voids and/or voids that cannot be filled, and/or where the properties are of poor quality or not 'future proofed' (i.e. in terms of adaptability for people with mobility related needs).</p> <p>In these circumstances, some LAs are working with housing providers to decommission or remodel shared housing, for example where the properties are no longer fit-for-purpose.</p> <p>Most LAs are not seeking to commission new shared supported housing services.</p>
People living in self contained supported housing	<p>All LAs are experiencing increasing preference/need for self contained forms of supported housing.</p> <p>Most LAs have already either developed this type of supported housing and/or have plans to develop/commission further capacity of this type of supported housing, in response to</p>

Current accommodation setting	Summary of evidence of need for housing/accommodation
	<p>increasing need.</p> <p>LAs are finding that individuals are preferring this model of housing as it provides a higher standard of living, with greater privacy, better accessibility and dwellings that are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant.</p> <p>LAs are also experiencing increased need for the use of technology enabled care in this type of housing, to complement staff support, which allows individuals a much greater sense of independence and these models allow for a better economy of scale with the delivery of the core care.</p>
<p>People living in general needs housing with support</p>	<p>There are typically fewer people living in general needs housing than in supported housing services.</p> <p>However, the majority of LAs are experiencing increasing and unmet need for people to live in general needs housing, typically in social housing, with an appropriate care and support package.</p> <p>This increased need is coming from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who do not want or need supported housing in the first place • People who no longer need to live in supported housing, i.e. they wish/need to 'move on' from supported housing to general needs housing • People with very complex support needs who need to live alone and for whom supported housing is often not appropriate in meeting their needs. <p>LAs recognise that there is scope to improve the application process for and allocation of social housing through Property Pool Plus or other Choice Based Lettings systems in order for it to work more effectively and sensitively for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism.</p> <p>Most LAs are working with Registered Providers to develop an increased supply overall of general needs social housing (typically 1-bed units).</p>

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday 23 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 4 FINANCIAL OUTTURN
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the year-end revenue and capital position for the Children, Young People and Education Committee for the 2023/24 financial year as at the end of March 2024. The report provides Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

The year-end revenue outturn for 2023/24, represents an adverse variance against the Committee revenue budget of directorate revenue budgets of £1.974m, which is a £1.609m deterioration from the quarter 3 forecast.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is not a key decision.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2023-2027 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People & Education Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the draft, unaudited 2023/24 outturn adverse Directorate variance of £1.974m, which has been managed corporately by utilising the contingency budget, savings from reduced energy costs and use of flexible use of capital receipts.
2. Note the progress on delivery of the 2023/24 savings programme.
3. Note the use of earmarked reserves, as detailed in table four.
4. Note the draft, unaudited 2023/24 capital outturn position detailed in table five.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the revenue and capital budgets and savings achievements enables decisions to be taken in a timely manner, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of the Council.
- 1.2 This report presents timely information on the full year financial position for 2023/24, prior to final audit engagement.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Policy and Resources Committee has previously determined the budget monitoring process and this report details the agreed course of action.
- 2.2 In striving to manage budgets, available options have been evaluated to maintain a balance between service delivery and a balanced budget.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the meeting on 27 February 2023, the Council agreed a net revenue budget for 2023/2024 of £366.6m to be met by government grants, council tax, and business rates. In quarter 1, a favourable £2.000m variation against the funding relating to an adjustment of Business Rates Section 31 grants, increased the revenue budget to £368.6m.
- 3.2 The Council's Quarter 1 monitoring report, presented on 12 July 2023 to the Policy & Resources Committee, highlighted growing in-year pressures of £3.6m, which had risen to £7.2m by Quarter 2 and £7.97m by Quarter 3. Several potential mitigations were identified that could be used to present a balanced budget at the end of the year. This report sets out the updated revenue financial position for the Children, Young People & Education Committee at the end of the year.

Economic Context

- 3.3 Throughout 2023/24 the headline consumer price inflation (CPI) continued to decline from 8.7% at the start of the year to 3.4% in February but was still above the Bank of England's 2% target.
- 3.4 Having begun the financial year at 4.25%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased the Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023 and it has remained at this level through to March 2024. Although financial markets have shifted their interest rate expectations downwards, with expectations of a cut early in the new year, the MPC's focus remains on maintaining the current interest rate in order to control inflation over the medium term.
- 3.5 The overall risk environment remained particularly challenging throughout 2023/24, with subdued economic activity, poor outlooks for growth and inflation and increased geopolitical tensions, all placing significant pressures on finances and restricting the ability to forecast and plan, with confidence.

Revenue Outturn Position

3.6 At the end of 2023/24, against the Directorate's revised net revenue budget of £88.307m there is an adverse variance of £1.974m, which can be managed corporately by utilising the contingency budget, savings from reduced energy costs, and utilisation of flexible use of capital receipts, along with reserves management.

TABLE 1: 2023/24 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION REVENUE BUDGET & OUTTURN

Service Area	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance	
			£'000	%
Children and Families	56,569	61,100	4,531	8%
Early Help and Prevention	11,001	9,154	(1,847)	(17%)
Modernisation and Support	4,518	4,371	(147)	(3%)
Schools -Core	16,219	15,656	(563)	(3%)
Directorate Deficit/(Surplus)	88,307	90,281	1,974	2%

3.7 Children and Families adverse variance of £4.531m

The adverse variance is predominately due to Children Looked After placement costs. As at the year end, the number of Children Looked After (CLA) has slightly decreased to 776, however there are still significant pressures from the CLA placement costs. Whilst the number of CLA has decreased, there has been a 24% increase in residential placements since the beginning of the financial year.

3.8 Early Help and Prevention favourable variance of £1.847m

The Family Matters service claimed additional income from the Supporting Families grant which has been invested in preventative services as well as contributing to social care activities during the year. The Outturn position includes a £0.67m contribution from the Public Health Grant towards the non-recurrent costs for Early Years and Youth activities, including Family Toolbox. There was also a release of reserves of £0.563m to help mitigate pressures across the directorate.

3.9 Modernisation and Support favourable variance of £0.147m

The favourable variance within modernisation and support is mainly due to staff being appointed to lower range of salary scales and vacancies which is above the staff salary savings target.

3.10 Schools Core favourable variance of £0.563m

The Children's assisted travel continued to add pressures to the area with an adverse variance of £1.369m. The growth in demand in academic year 2023/24 was significantly higher than anticipated. This is offset by a favourable variance of teacher Retirement Costs (£0.263m) and a release of an onerous contract of £1.449m set up for the PFI contract which is no longer required.

3.11 The pressures within Children's assisted travel and social care placements have been partly mitigated in year with underspends in early help and prevention, together with the one-off use of £1m social care reserve and additional use of Children's reserves. The CLA placement costs and SEND related costs will continue to be a pressure into 2024/25.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

TABLE 2: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION – DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG)

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance		Adverse/ Favourable
			(+ Adv / - Fav)		
	£000	£000	£000	%	
DSG Expenditure:					
Schools Block	118,186	118,169	-18	0%	Favourable
Schools Block De-delegated	2,086	2,126	40	2%	Adverse
Central School Services Block	2,058	2,059	1	0%	Adverse
High Needs	58,575	66,705	8,130	14%	Adverse
Early Years	22,111	21,742	-368	-2%	Favourable
Total Gross (Surplus) / Deficit	203,015	210,800	7,785	4%	Adverse
DSG Income:	-202,802	-202,574	228	0%	Adverse
Movement in DSG Reserve	-213	-8,226	-8,013	3757%	
Total Net (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	0%	

- 3.12 An adverse variance position for 2023/24 is resulting from the High Needs block with an adverse position of £8.13m. The adverse variance is mainly due to an increase in demand and complexity. Demand on this budget is expected to grow in line with the requests for Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments. The number of plans issued has increased by around 35% in 2023-24 compared to the last year. The total number of the EHCP issued in 2023/24 is 1,103, compared with 817 issued in 2022/23.
- 3.13 **Schools Block:** A favourable variance of £0.018m is unspent falling rolls and growth fund in 23-24. It has been agreed at September 23 Schools Forum that the balance is carried forward to 2024/25.
- 3.14 **Early Years:** A favourable variance of £0.368m is reported for 2023/24 due to the hours in January censuses which were used for the DfE funding were higher than the actual hours. The DSG Grant income budget for the Early Years has been adjusted to the expected grant amount based on the January 24 census.
- 3.15 **DSG Income:** An adverse variance of £0.228m is reported for 2023/24 due to the grant adjustments including a High Needs import and export adjustment and Early Years 2022/23 grant adjustment difference.
- 3.16 At the beginning of 2023/24 the cumulative DSG reserve opened with a deficit balance of £4.763m. The in-year deficit of £8.226m means that the total deficit balance to be carried forward into 2024-25 is £12.989m.

Action plan

- 3.17 It is recognised that there are a number of issues within the outturn position, and particularly the variances between quarter 3 and the final outturn, which will impact on the position in 2024/25.

- 3.18 In order to ensure that these issues are appropriately managed, actions for each directorate have been recorded in conjunction with the Director and progress against these will be monitored monthly.
- 3.19 This process will also monitor the activity data within the particularly high-risk areas that have emerged as budget pressures at the end of 2023/24 within the Childrens Directorate. The management and effective mitigation of these demand led costs is critical to achieve a balanced budget position in 2024/25 and beyond.
- 3.20 The issues that have emerged during the outturn process are largely relating to business as usual activities that fall outside the main Change Programme. The resourcing of these required activities will be considered alongside the existing transformation resource in place to support the Change Programme.
- 3.21 The outputs of this work and the proposed corrective action will feed into the budget setting process for 2025/26 and the next iteration of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.22 Enhanced procedural rigour in relation to the budget monitoring process is set out in the report titled 'Budget Monitoring and Budget Setting Processes' found later in the agenda. This outlines the stringent processes implemented for the upcoming fiscal year. The recent reorganising of financial operations has bolstered financial support and resources across the entire organisation to support these processes alongside the implementation of Oracle Fusion. This has equipped the Council with an accessible financial analysis tool. The enterprise resource planning software provides enhanced data integration, processing capabilities and reporting functionalities. With Oracle Fusion now operational, comprehensive insights can be derived from financial data through in-depth analysis, enabling more informed decision-making and strategic planning based on accurate, real-time financial information across all business units and operations.

Progress on delivery of the 2023/24 savings programme.

- 3.23 Table 3 presents the progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 approved savings. In terms of savings, £2.980m of the £4.180mm savings targets were delivered, representing 71% of the total savings target with a further 3% or £0.100m achieved through mitigation. The table below summarises the progress made by the Directorate:

TABLE 3: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION DELIVERY OF 2023/24 SAVINGS

Savings	Approved Saving £m	Delivered £m	Delivered through mitigation £m	Delayed/ unachieved in year £m
Reduction in Wirral's Looked After Children numbers	-0.410	-0.410	0	0
Reduction in contributions to the Regional Adoption Agency in line with the average number of referrals	-0.100	0	-0.100	0
Reduction in Teacher's pension liabilities to the council	-0.190	-0.190	0	0
Increase the number of children looked after placed in family	-1.100	0	0	-1.100

settings as opposed to higher cost residential settings				
Redesign and restructure of the Assessment and Intervention Service	-0.655	-0.655	0	0
Review of Supporting Families funding and Early Help budgets	-1.121	-1.121	0	0
Review of contracts within Children's Services	-0.250	-0.250	0	0
Review of council's contribution towards European Funded Send Inclusion Programme	-0.220	-0.220	0	0
Reduction in financial support to Kingsway High School	-0.134	-0.134	0	0
Total	-4.180	-2.980	-0.100	-1.100

3.24 During the last quarter there was an increase in the number of the Children Looked After placed in a residential setting; this increase was more than previously anticipated. Due to the costs associated with these placements, the saving of £1.1m against placement settings was unachieved at the end of the financial year.

Reserves and Balances

3.25 Earmarked reserves represent money that has been set aside for a clearly defined purpose, and which is available to meet future expenditure in that area, Table 4 overleaf sets out the reserves within Children, Young People & Education and the movement in year.

TABLE 4: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION - EARMARKED RESERVES

Reserve	Opening Balance £000	Use of Reserve £000	Contribution to Reserve £000	Closing Balance £000
Intensive Family Intervention Project	405	(405)	0	0
School Improvement -	856	(61)	0	795
Schools Causing Concern	500	(206)	0	294
SEND OFSTED Inspection Improvement Action Plan	880	(504)	0	376
Children's Centre – Outdoor Play	92	(41)	0	51
Looked After Children Education Services	111	0	0	111
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	23	0	0	23
SEND - High Needs	110	0	0	110
YOS - Remand & Mobile Youth Centre	121	0	0	121
Early Help & Play Development	117	(117)	0	0
DRIVE Safe lives & Domestic Abuse Hub	50	0	0	50
Children IT data system	127	(127)	0	0

Mersey & Cheshire ICS Pilot	20	0	0	20
Care Leaver Accommodation Development	203	(203)	0	0
Wirral Apprentice Programme	19	(19)	0	0
Help for Young People	26	(13)	0	13
Total	3,660	(1,696)	0	1,964

3.26 There were no contributions to reserves in 2023/24. As at Quarter 3, it was planned to utilise £1.132m of reserves in year. In order to reduce the overspend position, an additional £0.564m of reserves were applied in year.

Capital Programme

TABLE 5: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24

Capital Scheme	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
Basic Needs	424	43	(381)
Children's System Development	807	549	(258)
Condition/modernisation (SCA)	5,000	5,048	48
Connect the Classroom	0	767	767
Devolved Formula Capital	0	546	546
Family Hub Transformation Fund	167	82	(85)
High Needs Provision Capital	3,468	1,612	(1,856)
School remodelling (School Place Planning)	0	27	27
School Works DfE Ringfenced Receipts	0	1	1
Transforming Care – Therapeutic Short Breaks	695	546	(149)
Total	10,561	9,222	(1,339)

3.27 **School Condition Allocation (SCA) £5.048m** – £2.4m of spend on Kingsway Academy adaptations/ Claremount move phase 1 and Castleway & Leasowe Early Years schemes. £0.83m of spend on roof replacements for various schools. Still experiencing effects of the historic backlog in jobs and increased financial costs due to inflation rises and construction supply chain issues.

3.28 **Connect the Classroom (Department for Education DfE funded) £0.767m** – This is a £200m government funded programme to improve internet speed in schools, first published on 7th June 2023. This is done by upgrading Wi-Fi access points and network switches. The programme will run until 2025 and is applied for directly by the schools.

3.29 **Devolved Formula Capital (Department for Education DfE funded) £0.546m** – This is direct funding delegated to schools to maintain their buildings and fund other small scale capital projects.

3.30 **High Needs Provision Capital £1.612m**– To deliver additional classroom provision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils across several Special schools. The current programme includes a number of high-cost construction projects to support the creation of new High Needs places or the improvement of existing provision (for pupils with SEND) or requiring Alternative Provision (AP).

- 4.1 This is the Quarter 4 budget monitoring report that provides information on the revenue outturn for the Council for 2023/24. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Policy and Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget is reported at the end of the year.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.2 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 5.3 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered, and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 At this time, there are no additional resource implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there will be resource implications, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget for 2023/24 was dependent on a stable financial position. The delivery of the budget was subject to ongoing variables both positive and adverse which gave a level of challenge in achieving this outcome.
- 7.2 In any budget year, there is a risk that operation will not be constrained within relevant budget limits. Under specific circumstances the Section 151 Officer may issue a Section 114 notice, but that position has not been reached at the present time. The issuing of a Section 114 notice bans all new spending with the exception of protecting vulnerable people and statutory services and pre-existing commitments.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in arriving at the governance process for the 2023/24 budget monitoring process and the 2023/24 budget setting process.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 At this time, there are no further equality implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be equality implications associated with these, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report has no direct environmental implications; however due regard is given as appropriate in respect of procurement and expenditure decision-making processes that contribute to the outturn position.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 In year activity will have incorporated community wealth implications. Consideration would have taken account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- **Making wealth work for local places**

REPORT AUTHOR: **Jess Whitley**
(Head of Finance – People)
email: jessicawhitley@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children, Young People & Education Committee Report 21 June 2023: Budget and Budget Monitoring Process Report

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People & Education Committee	6 March 2024
Children, Young People & Education Committee	1 February 2024
Children, Young People & Education Committee	29 November 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	25 September 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	19 July 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	21 June 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	7 March 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	24 January 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	6 December 2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee	12 October 2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee	21 June 2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee	10 March 2022



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	BUDGET MONITORING AND BUDGET SETTING PROCESSES
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out how the 2024/25 budget will be monitored through the Committee system, which will facilitate the Policy and Services Committees (the Committees) to take ownership of their specific budgets and present appropriate challenge and scrutiny of Officers on the management and performance of those budgets.

The concurrent activity of budget setting for 2025/26, and how this will be approached, is also set out in this report; incorporated in which are:

- revisions to the approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) – the formulation of savings proposals and presentation of pressure/growth items
- the application of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) principles that underpin the budget process and decision-making, with links to the Council Plan
- how savings plans are to be configured
- considerations of requisite consultation exercises
- the role of the Finance Working Group

This matter relates to all Wards within the Borough and is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children, Young People and Education Committee:

1. Note the process for in-year monitoring of the 2024/25 budget.
2. Note the proposed approach to 2025/26 budget setting and the key assumptions that will be used.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The 2024/25 Council budget was agreed at Full Council on 26 February 2024. This budget was made up of savings proposals, pressures/growth items and funding that were based on actual known figures or best estimates available at the time. At any point during the year, these estimated figures could change and need to be monitored closely to ensure, if adverse, mitigating actions can be taken immediately to ensure a balanced budget can be reported to the end of the year.
- 1.2 The Council has a legal responsibility to set an annual balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. In order to successfully do so, engagement with members, staff and residents is undertaken. The recommendations in this report inform that approach.
- 1.3 Managing and setting a budget will require difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Regular Member engagement, which this report forms part of, is considered essential in delivering effective governance and financial oversight.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The proposals set out in this report are presented to allow for efficient and effective budget monitoring activity that can be conducted in a timely manner. As such, it is considered that to meet the business needs and address the challenges that the Council faces that no alternative options are viable or appropriate at this time.
- 2.2 Not engaging with the Committee at this time, on the matters set out, was an option that was available, however it is considered that involvement of Committees as soon as practical after the agreement of the 2024/25 budget will best assist in delivering the benefits detailed in paragraph 2.1.
- 2.3 In the event of the Section 151 Officer determining that a balanced financial position could not be presented, the Section 151 Officer would be required to issue a section 114 notice and report this to all Members of Full Council. The outcome of which could result in intervention by the Government.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Budget Monitoring Process

- 3.1 On 26 February 2024 Full Council approved the 2024/25 budget, which included significant budget savings/efficiencies (details provided at Appendix A) in order to present a balanced position for the year.
- 3.2 The calculation of the 2024/25 budget was prepared using known figures or best estimates available at the time. At any point during the year, internal or external factors may influence a change in these estimates which could either have a favourable or adverse impact on the ability to deliver a balanced position at financial year-end.
- 3.3 In order to ensure that a balanced position can be achieved, it is imperative that a robust process for monitoring and managing the budget is in place.

- 3.4 An internal officer governance process is in place, in line with past activity, to scrutinise and challenge budget performance in advance of financial forecasts being presented to the Committees. This process includes:
- Officers responsible for managing budgets (Budget Holders) should regularly examine financial data and transaction records within the Oracle finance system to ensure their accuracy and completeness.
 - Budget Holders and finance staff should convene frequent meetings to rigorously assess current income and expenditure levels, as well as determine future financial obligations. This analysis will facilitate the provision of dependable forecasts within the Oracle EPM finance system.
 - Directorate Management Team (DMT) review of the outcomes of the budget holder and finance staff meetings.
 - Scrutiny and challenge by DMTs as to the robustness of the figures and forecast presented in the context of Directorate-wide activity.
 - DMT agreement on appropriate remedial action where necessary.
 - Operational Performance Group (OPG) review and challenge of the forecast position.
 - Progress on approved savings items monitored through OPG.
 - Regular updates to Strategic Leadership Team for Senior Officer scrutiny and agreement on latest Council financial position.
 - Referral and/or escalation to SLT of potential financial pressures to provide organisational oversight in conjunction with other corporate initiatives.
 - Presentation to Committees.
- 3.5 To facilitate an understanding of income and expenditure levels against operational activities, Appendix B of this report provides the Committee with a detailed breakdown of their 2024/25 budgetary status, organised by functional area.
- 3.6 Once the Annual Budget and related policy framework is approved, it becomes the Council's decision and is effective immediately in respect of the relevant financial year in scope. The Council's Constitution provides that Policy and Service Committees and Officers are required to implement the Council's budget and policy framework as set out at Budget Council. In normal operating conditions, a Policy and Service Committee may only take decisions which are fully consistent with the Council approved budget and policy framework. Chief Officers must ensure that no commitments are made that would result in an approved budget being exceeded.
- 3.7 Each Committee will be responsible for:
- Ensuring that the committee budget is utilised effectively and responsibly and remains within the relevant budget envelope,
 - Implementing corrective measures, when appropriate, to address any adverse financial situations that may arise during the fiscal year. Such actions could include curtailing expenditure or reassessing spending priorities.
- 3.8 Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the entire budget will be in balance, including providing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line from any adverse variance position that may be forecast, which may take the form of providing direction to other Service Committees. Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for advising Full Council on organisation-wide financial activity.
- 3.9 To enable the Committees to manage and monitor budgets effectively in-year, a suite of detailed information will be provided on a quarterly basis, comprising:
- A report monitoring the revenue budget, including the most recent full-year financial forecast and evaluation.

- Full list of budget savings proposals and the progress for their achievement.
 - A report monitoring the capital budget, including the most recent full-year financial forecast and evaluation.
 - Other specific financial information relevant to the individual committee's decision-making process.
- 3.10 This information will be made available at the earliest committee meeting, following the quarter end and completion of the internal governance process, detailed in paragraph 3.4. The anticipated timetable for reporting quarterly financial information to committee is:
- Quarter 1 (1 Apr – 30 Jun): July 24
 - Quarter 2 (1 Jul – 30 Sep): November 24
 - Quarter 3 (1 Oct – 31 Dec): February 25
 - Quarter 4 (1 Jan – 31 Mar): June 25
- 3.11 Each Committee should have established a Budget Oversight Panel to facilitate regular space to review the budget position in between scheduled committee meetings during stages of the financial year.
- 3.12 The Budget Oversight Panel will comprise the Committee Chair and Spokespersons, the relevant Director and Assistant Directors (as required), Finance and Democratic Service representative.
- 3.13 The purpose of this group is to:-
- Ensure that Members are receiving the most current financial data and are monitoring the budget throughout the year.
 - Question the Director on implications of the financial data ahead of the scheduled Committee meeting.
 - Seek further information from the Director/Assistant Director where necessary.
 - Make reasonable requests for certain additional information to facilitate strategic decision-making.
 - Make links between financial performance and activity, to inform decision-making of the Committee.
 - Inform the process of efficiency target setting and monitor performance against delivery of efficiency targets agreed.
- 3.14 The Committees have the autonomy (subject to delegation levels) to enact budget virements (transfers) from one function to another within their overall committee budget envelope. Virements will also need to be agreed by the Section 151 Officer as there are certain conditions where budgets are not allowed to be transferred for the purposes of gaining a specific benefit.
- 3.15 The Committees will be responsible for containing net expenditure within their overall budget envelope and not overspending. Where an adverse variance is forecast, each committee will be required to take remedial action, with detailed plans and timeframes, to bring the budget back in line and ensure that overspends are mitigated. Where a committee has taken all possible steps for remedial action and is unable to fully mitigate an overspend, this must be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee who will then take an organisational-wide view of how this adverse variance will be managed. There must be immediate action agreed to ensure a deliverable, balanced forecast position can be reported, and this will be monitored on a regular basis by the Policy and Resources Committee.

- 3.16 Whilst each committee is required to remain within its annual budget envelope, situations may transpire that demonstrate an in-year favourable forecast variance being reported to a Committee. Committees wishing to use any forecast underspend, must have approval from the P&R Committee.
- 3.17 The Council must not be in a situation where one Committee is forecasting an overspend, unable to mitigate it, and another Committee is forecasting an underspend and takes a decision to utilise this for unplanned growth purposes. The Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for ensuring that operating in silos does not occur and that resources are aligned to Council objectives at all times.
- 3.18 The Policy and Resources Committee has ultimate responsibility for taking any necessary steps required to ensure a whole Council budget can report a balanced position throughout the year. The Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, will be responsible for ensuring that any budget actions, proposals and mitigations are achievable and legal.
- 3.19 The Finance Working Group will meet to support the Policy and Resources Committee in its aims of providing strategic direction to the operation of the Council, to maintain a strategic overview of budgets and to provide a coordinating role across all other service committees through a 'whole council view' of budget monitoring.

Budget Setting Process

- 3.20 The process for setting the budget for 2025/26 will commence immediately, building on the MTFP that was approved by Full Council on 26 February, as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.21 The most recent version of the MTFP contains a number of financial pressures and savings for 2025/26 (and beyond) that illustrate a budget gap of £3.191m. The budget setting process will need to close the budget gap, which will fluctuate during 2024/25 subject to further information and analysis of potential financial pressures as well as obtaining clarity on government and other funding available to the Council.
- 3.22 Included within the MTFP for 2025/26 is a suite of proposals for consideration in the proposed budget setting process. Officers will develop business cases for these proposals which will be shared with the regular committee Budget Oversight Panel meetings, concurrently serving as budget workshops for the Committees.
- 3.23 The budget workshops, a number of which will be convened between now and August in line with individual committee requirements, will allow current budget intelligence to be reviewed, challenged and modified. In order to close the budget gap, it will be necessary to consider a number of approaches, which will include:
- reviewing budget pressures with the aim of reducing them
 - reviewing income streams to ensure that maximum benefits are being obtained and that achievable targets are set.
 - reviewing opportunities for budget efficiencies and savings
- 3.24 It is considered vital that clear direction is given by Policy & Resources Committee to each Committee in respect of their budget setting objectives. To facilitate this, it is recommended that budget envelopes are constructed for each Committee to work to in order to provide a framework and clear goals to the approaches noted in paragraph 3.22. These envelopes will take account of the work of the change programme and any justifiable budgetary

pressures or additional factors that necessitate strategic management and mitigation. The Finance Working Group will play a key role in this process.

- 3.25 The methodology for constructing budget envelopes will follow the convention adopted for 2024/25, whereby MTFS principles were aligned to Directorate activity through targets that:
- Will produce a balanced budget and MTFP.
 - Prioritise statutory services and objectives in line with the Council Plan
 - Ensure that non-statutory services that are not supporting statutory services will be delivered only where there is no net cost to the Council.
 - Facilitate a strengthening of our reserves to ensure we have funds for the future to support the Council Plan
 - Demonstrate an appropriate approach to corporate risk.
- 3.26 Each Committee, via the budget workshops, will be accountable for identifying, developing and agreeing reductions in pressures and deliverable savings proposals to close the 2025/26 budget gap and ensure a draft balanced budget can be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in November 2024, to enable budget consultation to start in a timely manner. See Appendix C for a flow chart of the process for the 2025/26 budget and timeline.
- 3.27 In developing budget proposals, and reviewing budget activity, each Committee must adhere to the MTFS guiding principles, including the overarching principle that all investment and savings decisions will be aligned to the priorities within the Council Plan:
1. Fees & Charges will be reviewed annually and adjusted for inflation, regulatory guidance, and competitiveness. When setting charges, the impact on vulnerable groups will be considered.
 2. Capital decisions will be based upon strong business cases, taking account of invest to save principles where appropriate. Whole life capital financing costs impacting the net revenue position of the Council will be fully considered and reflected in the MTFP.
 3. Service level spend will be benchmarked with suitable peer groups and regularly reviewed to ensure the principle of an efficient Council is being achieved.
 4. The Council will maximise the opportunities from automation and a policy of 'Digital First' in service delivery.
 5. Service reviews will be undertaken Council wide within the timeframe of the MTFS. This will ensure that operating models, organisational design and costs are subject to regular reviews and adjustment.
 6. Service development, savings, and investment will be brought forward based on business cases that must demonstrate alignment to the Corporate Plan, feasibility, deliverability and value for money.
 7. The Council will consult with stakeholders across the borough in forming budget proposals.
 8. The Council will review alternate delivery models and seek joint working and management initiatives with regional and other partners to align to the Wirral Plan.
 9. The Council will continually review its Earmarked Reserves for appropriateness and purpose. Unearmarked reserves will be brought to a level of 5% of net expenditure by 2026/27.
 10. Given the challenging financial position of the Council and the need to maintain key statutory services. The Council will seek to maximise receipts from all funding streams, including Council Tax over the period of the MTFS.
- 3.28 Further to these guiding principles the following specific key assumptions will be used for the initial formulation of 2025/26 budget figures:

- Council Tax increase of 2.99% (1.99% general fund 1% Social Care Precept)
- A minimum 3% inflation increase within social care services (largely linked to RLW).
- 2% Increase in pay costs
- 2% Contract inflation.
- Levies to be increased in line with levying body forecasts.
- £2m contribution to the general reserves
- The financial pressures faced by the Adults and Children's Directorates must be addressed within their existing budgetary allocations, supplemented by any funding increases derived from the social care precept and any other additional grant funding enhancements.
- Any funding gap for the Birkenhead Commercial District will be met from the Wirral Growth Company profits in year.
- Remaining Budget Gap will be bridged from savings identified via Change Programme and Strategic Transformation activity.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report sets out the 2024/25 budget monitoring process and 2025/26 budget setting process and has no direct financial implications. The outcome of the processes will, if not adhered to or a suitable alternative process agreed, will have significant financial implications. However, the proposals set out control environments and a timeline of activity deemed necessary as part of sound financial management regime.
- 4.2 If the annual budget cannot be balanced, this may result in a Section 114 report being issued by the Section 151 Officer - once issued there are immediate constraints on spending whereby no new expenditure is permitted, with the exception of that funding statutory services, including safeguarding vulnerable people, however other existing commitments and contracts can continue to be honoured.
- 4.3 The Council delivers both statutory and non-statutory services at present – the requirement to eliminate subsidies provided to non-statutory services is considered to be a key requirement in delivering value for money and ensuring that finite resources are targeted on beneficial outcomes.
- 4.4 The Financial Management Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes they have in place satisfy the principles of good financial management, based on the following six principles:
- Organisational Leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisation culture.
 - Accountability – based on Medium-Term Financial Planning, that derives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
 - Financial management - undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer actions and elected member decision making.
 - Professional standards - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
 - Assurance - sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection.
 - Sustainability - The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.
- 5.2 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.3 Once a budget is in place, Council has delegated responsibility to the Policy and Services Committees to implement it. The Committees **may not within, normal business operating conditions**, act contrary to the Budget without consent of Council other than in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of the Constitution.
- 5.4 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that agreed savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 At this time, there are no additional resource implications. There may be resource requirements of any action resulting in remedial or mitigating tasks if an adverse forecast is reported with regards the 2024/25 budget in year, however these will be reported at the appropriate time.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position in year. Examples of which are new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, etc.
- 7.2 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.
- 7.3 The risk of this not being able to be achieved could mean that the Council does not have enough funding to offset its expenditure commitments for the year and therefore not be able to report a balanced budget at the end of the year. This could result in the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice.
- 7.4 A key risk to the Council's financial plans is that funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the MTFP is regularly reviewed and updated as part of the financial management.

- 7.5 Under the system of retained Business Rates, Authorities benefit from a share of any increased revenues but are liable for at least a share of any falls in income (subject to safety net triggers) and any non-collection. This includes reductions arising from appeals relating to past years which partially fall on the Authority. These risks are mitigated through a combination of the operation of the Collection Fund and General Fund Balances.
- 7.6 Assumptions have been made in the current budget outlook for income and funding from business rates and council tax and social care grants as the main sources of funding. If there is an adverse change to these assumptions as a result of government announcements, additional savings proposals or reduced expenditure would need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a balanced five-year MTFP can be achieved. Committees will be kept updated with any announcements regarding the local government finance settlement through the year.
- 7.7 Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team in arriving at the governance process for the budget monitoring and setting processes.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 There are no specific equality implications of this report regarding processes, however, it is recognised that some of the developing proposals for budgets could have equality implications. Any implications will be considered and any negative impacts will be mitigated where possible.
- 9.3 Equality implications will be assessed during planning, decision and implementation stages and will be recognised as an ongoing responsibility. Any equality implications will be reported to the Committees. Equality issues will be a conscious consideration and an integral part of the process.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 At this time, there are no additional environmental and climate implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be environment and climate implications associated with these that will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report has no direct community wealth implications however any budget proposals to be developed should take account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- **Making wealth work for local places**

REPORT AUTHOR: Mark Goulding
(Senior Finance Manager)
email: markgoulding@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Savings agreed at full Council for 2024/25

Appendix 2. Committee Budget Book details

Appendix 3. Flow chart of the process for the 2025/26 budget setting.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Pressure and Growth Proposals

Savings and Income Proposals

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Full Council	26 February 2024
Policy and Resources Committee Environment, Climate	13 February 2024
Emergency and Transport Committee	29 January 2024
Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee	2 February 2024
Children, Young People & Education Committee	1 February 2024
Economy Regeneration & Development Committee	22 January 2024
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	23 January 2024
Policy and Resources Committee	8 November 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	4 October 2023

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

Theme	Option	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)
Committee: Adult Care & Public Health						
Changing how we fund or provide services	Review of Adult Social Care cost-effectiveness	-4.800	-5.040	-5.292	-5.557	-5.668
Committee: Children, Young People & Education						
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Reduction in teachers' pension liabilities	-0.200	-0.075	-0.050	0.000	0.000
	Kingsway PFI buy out	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Re-organisation of Early Help, Family Support and Social Care into locality teams.	-0.550	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Changing how we fund or provide services	Reduction in looked after children (LAC) numbers	-0.330	-0.439	-0.375	0.000	0.000
	Reducing High Cost Residential Care	-1.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Promoting Independence	-0.300	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000
Committee: Economy, Regeneration & Housing						
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Implementation of Corporate Landlord model.	-0.050	-0.250	-0.120	0.000	0.000
Committee: Tourism, Communities Culture & Leisure						
Changing how we fund or provide services	Active Wirral Strategy	0.000	-1.000	-2.000	0.000	0.000
	Review library provision and location of Birkenhead and Wallasey libraries.	0.000	-0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Floral Pavilion	-1.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Committee: Policy & Resources						
Increasing Income	Increase in Fees and Charges	-0.750	-0.600	-0.450	-0.450	-0.450
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Enabling Services	-2.160	-2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Cease subsidised traded services.	-0.350	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
TOTAL SAVINGS		-12.390	-9.854	-8.287	-6.007	-6.118



Children, Young People and Education Committee Budget Details

Contents:

- A. Introduction and 2024/25 Budget Summary
- B. Service area summary narratives
- C. Key Priorities for 2024/25
- D. 2024/25 Subjective and Objective Budgets
- E. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)
- F. Approved Savings
- G. Capital Budgets
- H. Reserves

A.Introduction and 2024/25 Budget summary

Children, Young People and Education Committee 2024/25 Budgets

This Committee is responsible for education, social care services and health services to children and young people and exercises the functions of the Council as Local Education Authority. This means the Committee is directly responsible for £92.2m of Council funding and for overseeing school spending of £231.0m.

The tables below breakdown and explain the financial resources available to the Committee in 2024/25.

Revenue Budgets

Revenue Budgets are the monies the Council allocates for its day-to-day expenditure. It is the amount of money the Council requires to provide its services during the year.

Table 1 below, highlights how the Council funded revenue budgets that are allocated across the various Service Areas relevant to the Children, Young People & Education Committee.

TABLE 1 2024/25 Children, Young People & Education

Service Area	Budget £'000
Children and Families	60,476
Early Help, Prevention & Effectiveness	11,001
Effectiveness & Improvement	4,231
Education – Core	16,126
SEND - Statutory	2,883
Total Committee Budget	94,716

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

B.Service area summary narratives

Children & Families

This area is made up of various teams which include:

- 5 Assessment teams
- 4 Court Teams
- 2 Child in Need/Contingency Teams
- 6 Children Looked After Permanence Teams
- Integrated Front Door (IFD)
- Emergency Duty Team

IFD is a service that investigates referrals of a child or young person at risk of harm or abuse.

The principal responsibility of the Emergency Duty Team is to respond to out of hours referrals where intervention from the local authority is required to safeguard a vulnerable child or adult, and where it would not be safe, appropriate, or lawful to delay that intervention to the next working day.

This area also includes Section 17 costs which provide support for children and families at times of crisis.

There are Fostering Teams which administer the fostering process and the payment of fostering allowances to Foster-carers.

The Adoption in Merseyside scheme is administered under this area and looks after the costs of setting up new adopters, this scheme is in participation with other Local authorities in the city region.

This will also include the costs of any children who are adopted out of area.

Adoption allowances, Special Guardianship allowances and Staying Put allowances are administered in this area.

The biggest budget area is Placements and Placement commissioning, which includes placement of children with independent care providers, independent foster carers and independent placements within Wirral.

The Willow-tree In House Residential and short breaks provision is also included within this service area.

This area covers the Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance unit, the Practice Improvement team and the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

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Early Help, Prevention & Effectiveness

Family Help service consisting of School and Communities Service including:

Team around the School

Team around school is a partnership between schools and other agencies. Services can involve school nurses, social workers and after school activities.

Youth & Play

Consisting of Youth hubs across the borough

Early Childhood

Early Childhood consists of Children's centres around Wirral that bring together a range of services for families and children from pre-birth to five. Children's centres are designed to give children a fun and safe environment to learn, develop, make friends and play. They give parents the chance to meet other parents from the local area and establish friendships.

Family Matters

Family Matters support children and young people and their families in partnership with other agencies. The support provided includes:

- Positive relationships/friendships
- Self-esteem and confidence building
- Encourage engagement in positive activities as part of the whole family
- Safety in and out of the family home
- Internet Safety
- Support accessing other services (youth, school, health, early childhood services)
- Online safety
- Parenting and boundaries
- Mediation
- Employment
- Housing
- Debt management support

Supporting Families, Family Toolbox and Early Help Alliance

Domestic Abuse Services

This area consists of

- Family Safety Unit
- Early Intervention Team

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Family Safety Unit (FSU) is a team of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. The FSU provides independent and impartial advice to any high risk victim / survivor of domestic abuse.

Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Offending

Safeguarding and Youth Offending consists of 4 teams,

- Contextual safeguarding
- Wirral Youth Justice Service
- Outreach Team
- Compass Team

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. Traditional approaches to protecting children/young people from harm have focussed on the risk of violence and abuse from inside the home, usually from a parent/carer or other trusted adult and do not always address the time that children/young people spend outside the home and the influence of peers on young people's development and safety. Contextual safeguarding recognises the impact of the public/social context on young people's lives, and consequently their safety. Contextual safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people. It is an approach that looks at how interventions can change the processes and environments, to make them safer for all young people, as opposed to focussing on an individual.

Wirral Youth Justice Service provides a service for young people aged 10 to 17 who have been involved in offending behaviour. It is a multi-agency service, made up of social workers, youth justice workers and staff from education, police, probation, and health. The service includes:

- Supervision of young people who have been referred by the police for out of court disposal and those sentenced by the Court.
- Support to parents and carers
- Out of Court Disposal (OCD) service for young people who have been arrested for less serious offences, admitted their guilt and it is agreed that diversion from the Criminal Justice Service is a more appropriate option.
- Prevention work

Youth Outreach teams provide early help across Wirral borough engaging with young people who are often vulnerable to exploitation and criminality. The team engage and build positive relationships with young people to ensure they get the right support to help build skills and promote resilience.

The Compass Team Child is a dedicated resource to tackle child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. The team is multi-agency and takes a problem-solving approach to improving the lives of children and young people in Wirral. The Compass

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

Team will provide expert advice and guidance to colleagues and practitioners, as well as working directly on cases with higher levels of need.

Effectiveness & Improvement

These two sections provide support to all the other services within Children's services including admin, partner contracts, service improvements and system support.

Education – Core

School Improvement

The school improvement service provides professional development and support to help schools develop their leadership, staff, and curriculum, so they can improve their results and performance.

The statutory functions of a LA in relation to school improvement are:

- moderating the teacher assessments carried out at the end of key stage 1 by schools (in reading, writing and mathematics) in at least 25% of maintained schools each school year and ensure that every school will be subject to moderation at least once every four years;
- appointing a person to complete the assessment moderations who has recent experience of provision of the National Curriculum in primary schools;
- having equivalent duties in respect of key stage 2.

In addition, there is the duty to:

- set up and carry out moderation arrangements in the Early Years in accordance with 2022 Early years foundation stage assessment and reporting arrangements
- monitor the administration of the phonics screening check in accordance with Key stage 2 tests and phonics screening check: monitoring visits - GOV.UK

Education for looked after children

This service is responsible for promoting educational achievement of looked-after children. This includes:

- children currently looked after
- children previously looked after
- care leavers

In delivering this service, Wirral appoints a 'virtual headteacher' who works at a strategic level, but not in a physical school building.

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Assisted Transport

This reflects the direct transportation costs resulting from the application of Wirral Council's Home to School Transport Policy. The policy reflects the statutory requirements placed on Local Authorities to provide financial assistance with home to school transport for 5-16 year olds including those that have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) where eligibility criteria is met.

From 2024/25 the budget for the school transport escort costs and Adult social care transport cost have been added to the service area.

Careers Education Information and Guidance

This service is for eligible young people not in employment, education, or training. It aims to raise the aspirations of young people and support you into employment or learning. Career Connect delivers the service, providing face to face guidance as well as telephone support and online access to services.

Lifelong Learning & Apprenticeships for Care leavers

The Lifelong Learning service offers courses for adults (19+). The primary aim of the service is to help adults with few, low or no qualifications into the job market. The service offers a range of high quality and affordable qualification based and community learning courses, and shorter workshop sessions (2-3hours) as an introduction to our longer courses. The operational activities of this service are wholly grant funded.

Contractual obligations

In addition to service delivery budgets, contractual costs are also included in the schools – core overall budget as follows:

- Private Financing Initiative (PFI) – there are 9 PFI school sites in Wirral. This budget funds the affordability gap which is the difference between the cost of PFI and the funding from PFI Grant and school contributions.
- Teacher retirement Costs - the Council is responsible for the costs of the additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the Teachers Pension Scheme.

SEND – Statutory

Educational Psychologists

Educational Psychologists use their training in psychology and knowledge of child development to assess difficulties children may be having with their learning. They provide advice and training on how schools might help children to learn and develop.

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

They recommend methods, or develop strategies in partnership with schools, to help a child learn more effectively. Strategies may include teaching approaches, improvements to learning environments, advice on curriculum materials and behaviour support.

Educational psychologists also keep up-to-date with best practice, policy and research relating to how children learn and make sure this informs local policy and practice.

SEN Assessments

This SEN Assessments team deliver the process that supports young people aged up to 25 with special education needs. The key element of this service is the education, health, and care (EHC) plan process. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

A young person can request an assessment themselves if they are aged 16 to 25. A request can also be made by anyone else who thinks an assessment may be necessary, including doctors, health visitors, teachers, parents, and family friends.

C.Key Priorities for 2024/25

There are approximately 68,000 children and young people living in Wirral, for whom, the Children's Services directorate exists to ensure that they are safe, their welfare is promoted, and that they can access the education, support, information, and guidance they need for adulthood.

The Directorate has the following key priorities for 2024/25:

- Promoting opportunities for all children and young people in Wirral
- Doing the right thing for children and families
- Children who come into care are better off because of it
- Delivering improved practice and effective services

D. 2024/25 Subjective and Objective Budgets

TABLE 2 2024/25 Children, Young People & Education

Table 2, overleaf, highlights how the revenue budget is allocated across the various subjective, or types, of expenditure.

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Subjective	Budget (£'000)
Expenditure	
Employee	50,055
Non Pay	35,344
Cost of Care	31,738
Total Expenditure	117,136
Income	-22,420
Total Committee Budget	94,716

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

Table 3 below, provide a further detailed breakdown of the service budgets.

TABLE 3: 2024/25 Children, Young People & Education – Service budgets (Objective and Subjective combined)

Service Area	Employee £'000	Non Pay £'000	Cost of Care £'000	Income £'000	Grand Total £'000
Children and Families					
Assessment & Intervention Service 1	9,493	631	0	-765	9,358
Assistant Director - Children and Families	935	301	0	-139	1,096
Fostering, Adoption and placement commissioning	6,017	5,605	31,738	-639	42,721
One off Pressures	0	-136	0	0	-136
Permanence Service	4,197	742	0	-78	4,861
Safeguarding QA and Practice Improvement	2,589	132	0	-146	2,575
Early Help, Prevention & Effectiveness					
Domestic Abuse	900	7	0	-171	737
Early Childhood	2,557	568	0	-230	2,896
Family Matters	3,616	127	0	-1,705	2,038
Safeguarding and Youth Offending	3,386	250	0	-1,139	2,497
Team around the School	1,617	1,255	0	-39	2,832
Effectiveness & Improvement					
Business Management Support	1,314	1,300	0	-254	2,359
Childrens Management	86	27	0	-7	107
Modernisation	1,048	265	0	0	1,314
Performance Improvement	531	19	0	-99	451
Education - Core					
Careers Education Information and Guidance	716	785	0	-378	1,123
Childrens Assisted Travel	2,861	7,608	0	-1,568	8,901
Education for looked after children	578	-104	0	-356	118
Educational Psychologists	887	32	0	-15	904

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

Service Area	Employee £'000	Non Pay £'000	Cost of Care £'000	Income £'000	Grand Total £'000
Lifelong learning and apprenticeships for care leavers	1,008	292	0	-1,300	0
Private Financing Initiative	0	15,564	0	-12,096	3,469
School Improvement	648	429	0	-730	347
SEN Assessments	2,378	-399	0	0	1,978
Teacher Retirement Costs	2,175	0	0	0	2,175
Services to Schools (Traded)	519	43	0	-569	-6
Total Committee Budget	50,055	35,344	31,738	-22,420	94,716

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

E.Dedicated Schools (DSG)

In addition to Council funding, the DSG is provided by the Department for Education (DFE) to support Wirral's schools' budget. DSG is a ring-fenced grant solely to be used to deliver education.

Table 4 below highlights the planned expenditure for each of the different funding blocks and the finding analysis.

TABLE 4 2024/25 Dedicated Schools Grant

	Budget £000
DSG Block costs:	
Schools Block	115,393
Schools de-delegated	1,958
Central Schools Costs	2,022
High Needs	72,726
Early Years	36,967
Total Expenditure	229,066
Funding:	
DSG Grant income	(219,149)
Use of DSG reserve	(10,917)
Total DSG Budget	0

Schools Block - the total budget for all maintained mainstream schools.

Schools De-delegated - funds deducted from school's budget share and held centrally to fund relevant services.

Central Schools Costs - central functions carried out on behalf of maintained schools and academies e.g., School Admissions.

High Needs Block – budget for pupils and students aged 0 to 24, with **high needs including the special schools**.

The Early Years – provision of early education to those 2 and 3/4-year-old children who are entitled to receive it free of charge. The 2024/25 budget includes the first two stages of rolling out of the EY Extended Entitlements announced in July 2023:

- From April 24 – 15 hours per week for all working parents of 2 year olds
- From September 24 – 15 hours per week for all working parents of children aged 9 months to 3 years.

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

DSG Grant income – the 2024/25 allocation after Academy budget recoupment including two schools converted in April and May 2025.

Use of the DSG reserve - an anticipated in-year deficit balance of the High Needs block to be added to the cumulative deficit reserve balance at the end of the financial year. It should be noted, there is a risk that the deficit may have to be included in the Council's overall reserves as the statutory override that separated DSG deficits from the authority's wider finances is due to expire at the end of 2025/26

F.Approved Savings

Savings Title	Agreed Value
Reduction of Historic Teachers Pensions Costs	£0.20m
Kingsway PFI buy out	£0.50m
Reorganisation of Early Help, Family Support and Social Care into locality teams	£0.55m
Reduction in looked after children (LAC) numbers	£0.33m
Reducing High Cost Residential Care	£1.10m
Promoting Independence	£0.30m
TOTAL	£2.98m

APPENDIX ONE – SAVINGS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL

G.Capital Budgets

Capital budgets are the monies allocated for spend on providing or improving non-current assets, which include land, buildings, and equipment, which will be of use or benefit in providing services for more than one financial year.

TABLE 5 Children, Young People & Education – Capital Budgets

Capital Scheme	2024/25 Budget £000	2025/26 Budget £000	2026/27 Budg et £000	2027/28 Budg et £000	2028/29 Budg et £000
Children, Young People & Education					
Basic Needs	504	427	0	0	0
Child Care Capital Expansion Fund	604	0	0	0	0
Children's System Development	445	0	0	0	0
Condition/modernisation (SCA)	6,698	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Family support	157	0	0	0	0
High Needs Provision Capital	2,520	0	0	0	0
School Works - Department for Education Ringfenced Receipts	722	722	0	0	0
Transforming Care - Therapeutic Short Breaks	168	0	0	0	0
Total Children, Young People & Education	11,818	3,649	2,500	2,500	2,500

APPENDIX TWO – COMMITTEE BUDGET DETAILS

H. Reserves

Earmarked reserves are amounts set aside for specific purposes or projects.

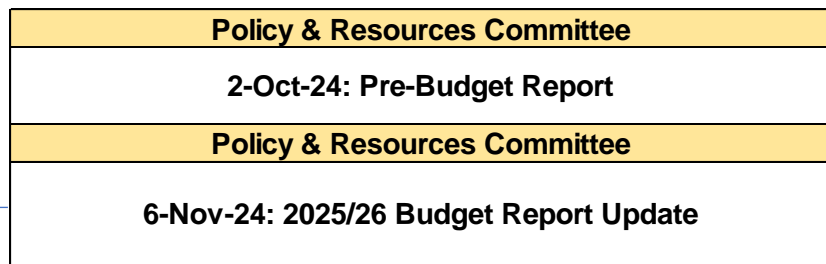
TABLE 6 2024/25 Children, Young People & Education – Reserve position

	Opening balance £000
Service reserves:	
Children’s Centre – Outdoor Play	51
DRIVE Safelives & Domestic Abuse Hub	50
YOS - Remand & Mobile Youth Centre	121
Local Safeguarding Children’s Board	23
Mersey & Cheshire ICS Pilot	20
School Improvement	795
Schools Causing Concern	294
SEND OFSTED Inspection Improvement Action Plan	376
Looked After Children Education Services	111
SEND - High Needs	110
Total Reserves	1,951
Dedicated Schools Grant	
Deficit DSG reserve	12,989

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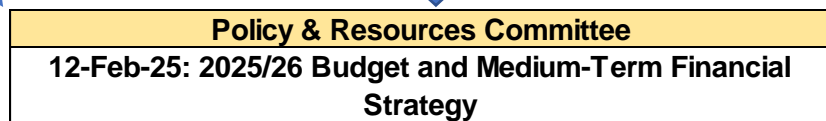
APPENDIX THREE – FLOW CHART FOR 2025/26 BUDGET SETTING

Committee	Budget Workshops	Budget Workshop Feedback reported to Committee
Adult Social Care and Public Health	Jul - Aug	15-Oct-24
Children, Young People and Education	Jul - Aug	16-Oct-24
Economy Regeneration and Development	Jul - Aug	14-Oct-24
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport	Jul - Aug	21-Oct-24
Policy & Resources	Jul - Aug	02-Oct-24
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure	Jul - Aug	17-Oct-24



Consultation

Finance Working Group



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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (THE PERIOD TO 30 JUNE 2024)
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the financial monitoring information, revenue and capital position for the Children, Families and Education Committee as at Quarter 1 (30 June) of 2024/25. The report provides Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers.

Managing a budget requires difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Regular Member engagement, which this report forms part of, is considered essential in delivering effective governance and financial oversight.

At the end of Quarter 1, there is a forecast adverse position of £7.604m on the revenue budget of Children, Families and Education revised net revenue budget of £94.716m

This is not a key decision and affects all wards.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2023-2027 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Families and Education Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the forecast adverse position of £7.604m presented at Quarter 1.
2. Note the progress on delivery of the 2024/25 savings programme at Quarter 1.
3. Note the forecast level of reserves and balances at Quarter 1.
4. Note the budget virements due to administrative changes in the allocation of Service budgets between directorates, as detailed in paragraph 3.15.
5. Note the capital position at the end of Quarter 1.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the revenue budgets and savings achievements enables decisions to be taken in a timely manner, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of Wirral Council.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Policy & Resources Committee has previously determined the budget monitoring process and this report details the agreed course of action.
- 2.2 In striving to manage budgets, available options have been evaluated to maintain a balance between service delivery and a balanced budget.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the meeting on 26 February 2023, the Council agreed a net revenue budget for 2024/2025 of £399.6m to be met by government grants, council tax, and business rates. At the end of Quarter 1, there is a forecast adverse position of £12.493m on Directorate spend. This position is based on activity to date, projected trends in income and expenditure and changes to Council funding. The Children, Education and Families forecast contribute £7.604m of this adverse budget variance.

This is a serious financial position for the Council that needs to be significantly mitigated in-year through all available measures to reduce expenditure and generate cost savings. The source of the overspend reflects the outturn position from 2023/24 for which an action plan has been developed and implemented. This is designed to address the main issues generating the adverse position and progress will be reported on this in all future reports and to the relevant committees. However, the majority of this overspend is a consequence of increased demand and costs for social care services and will not be easily resolved.

Whilst the overall position can currently largely be managed in-year by

- a) utilising the contingency budgets,
- b) applying flexible use of capital receipts to fund transformational revenue spend, and
- c) re-provisioning of earmarked reserves,

it is not a sustainable position going forward and will adversely impact budget planning for 2025/26.

Economic Context

- 3.2 While geopolitical events pose potential threats to price stability, the UK's inflation outlook remains positive. The headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 2.0% in the year to May 2024, while core inflation has markedly declined in recent months. This sustained downward trend in UK inflation is projected to persist, prompting market analysts to forecast lower interest rates in the latter part of the year.

- 3.3 In June, the Bank of England maintained its Bank Rate at 5.25%. While the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) recognises the need to stimulate the UK economy by lowering rates in upcoming quarters, concerns over persistent inflationary pressures are likely to postpone any cuts until the third quarter of 2024. Experts anticipate a gradual reduction, with rates potentially reaching around 3% by late 2025.
- 3.4 The results of the UK general election will play a pivotal role in determining the economic trajectory in the coming financial year. Regardless of which political party is successful, the election outcome will influence a range of factors, from fiscal policies and public spending to trade relations and regulatory frameworks.
- 3.5 The overall economic environment, whilst forecast to be more stable than recent years, there remains a great deal of uncertainty and challenge which will need to be monitored carefully as the year progresses. In this context, the Council must remain agile and ready to respond to emerging trends and unforeseen events. Regular reassessment of economic indicators and global developments will be key to navigating this calmer, yet still challenging, economic landscape.

Quarter 1 Forecast Revenue Outturn Position

- 3.6 Table 1 presents the forecast outturn as a net position, i.e., expenditure minus income. Favourable variances (underspends) are shown as negative values and adverse variances (overspends) are shown as a positive value.
- 3.7 At the end of Quarter 1, the forecast outturn position for Children, Families and Education is an adverse variance of £7.604m against a net revenue budget of £94.716m.

TABLE 1: 2024/25 CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION REVENUE BUDGET & FORECAST OUTTURN

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
	£000	£000	(+ Adv / - Fav) £000	%
Children and Families	60,476	66,272	5,796	10%
Early Help, Prevention & Effectiveness	11,001	9,522	-1,479	-13%
Effectiveness & Improvement	4,231	4,285	54	1%
Education - Core	16,126	18,177	2,051	13%
SEND – Statutory	2,883	4,064	1,181	41%
Children Families and Education Net Expenditure	94,716	102,320	7,604	8%

Significant aspects of revenue variances by service area:

Children and Families adverse variance of £5.796m

- 3.8 The number of Children Looked After (CLA) has slightly decreased to 764 as at the end of June, however, there are still significant pressures from the CLA placement costs. Whilst the number of CLA has decreased, there has been a 24% increase in residential placements since April 2023. There are currently 92 children in a residential placement at an average weekly cost of £4,659. The budget has been predicated on the aspiration that more children within Wirral are to be supported in effective foster placements as opposed to residential care, however this is against the current trend that has been experienced. Work is underway to translate the aspiration into foster placements and this will be monitored by officers.

TABLE 2: Number of Children in Care

Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24
770	789	804	766	769	780	772	767	764

Education - Core: forecast adverse variance of £2.051m

- 3.9 The main pressures within the Education - Core budget is home to school transport service with £2.811m adverse position forecasted. This includes a pressure from the escort budget (£0.705m adverse variance) transferred from the Neighbourhood directorate which was previously reported in the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee reports. The forecast is based on the current activity levels plus an assumed 7% increase from September for the new academic year with additional demands This has been partly mitigated with saving targets in the other areas.

SEND – Statutory: forecast adverse variance of £1.181m

- 3.10 The SEND – Statutory includes two budget areas, Education Psychological services and SEND Assessment Team. The increasing demand for Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) continues and additional resources are required to progress further improvement in SEND (Special Educational Need and Disabilities) support and services.

Pressures to be managed.

- 3.11 It is financially imperative and legally required that the Council report a balanced position at the end of the financial year. Failure to do so results in the Council's Section 151 officer having to produce a Section 114 report under the Local Government Act 1988.
- 3.12 A number of actions and projects have been taken by the Senior Leadership Team to try and address the overall position. In relation to Children, Families and Education, this ranges from the development of joint commissioning activities within Adults and Childrens, panels reviewing high-cost placements, development of a strategy to increase foster care provision and the implementation of the findings from the Home to School Transport review.

Role of Policy and Service Committee

- 3.13 As per the 'Budget Monitoring and Budget Setting Processes Report', which can be found elsewhere on the Committee's agenda, Committees are responsible for containing net expenditure within their overall budget envelope and not overspending. Where an adverse variance is forecast, each committee will be required to take remedial action, with detailed plans and timeframes, to bring the budget back in line and ensure that overspends are mitigated.
- 3.14 Where a committee has taken all possible steps for remedial action and is unable to fully mitigate an overspend, this must be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee who will then take an organisational-wide view of how this adverse variance will be managed. There must be immediate action agreed to ensure a deliverable, balanced forecast position can be reported, and this will be monitored on a monthly basis by the Policy and Resources Committee Finance Working group.

Budget Virements/ Amendments

- 3.15 Since the end of 2023/24, there have been some administrative changes to how services report between directorates. All elements of the Assisted Travel Service have been consolidated into the Children Families and Education Directorate. This is an administrative change that does not impact the strategic delivery of services.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- 3.15 There are no DSG variances forecast as at quarter 1 although pressures may arise in the high needs block during the autumn term.

TABLE 3: 2024/25 CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION – DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG)

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance (+ Adv / - Fav)	
	£000	£000	£000	%
DSG Expenditure:				
Schools Block	115,393	115,393	0	
Schools Block De-delegated	1,958	1,958	0	
Central School Services Block	2,022	2,022	0	
High Needs	72,726	72,726	0	
Early Years	36,967	36,967	0	
Total Gross Surplus / (Deficit)	229,066	229,066	0	
DSG Income:	-218,149	-218,149	0	0%
Movement in DSG Reserve	-10,917	-10,917	0	0%
Total Net Surplus / (Deficit)	0	0	0	0%

- 3.16 The Q1 forecast reflects an in-year deficit of £10.917m to be added to the High Needs deficit. The actual deficit brought forward at 31 March 2023 is £12.989m and this means that the DSG deficit reserve will be increased and around £23.905m at the end of 2024/25.
- 3.17 From Spring 2023, the Council has been participating in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme which is the DfE's support package to help local authorities maintain effective SEND services while functioning sustainably. Following the diagnostic phase ended in December 23, the action plans are being delivered by utilising £1m DBV grant awarded in April 24.
- 3.18 It should be noted, there is a risk that the deficit may have to be included in the Council's overall reserves as the statutory override that separated DSG deficits from the authority's wider finances is due to expire at the end of 2025/26. Local authorities are calling for an extension to the override, however, no announcement has been made from the DfE to date.

Progress on delivery of the 2024/25 savings programme.

- 3.19 Table 4 presents the progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 approved savings. For savings rated as Amber, an equal amount of temporary in-year mitigation has been identified to cover any shortfalls which may occur. For savings rated as red, the contingency fund set up for non-achieved savings will need to be utilised.
- 3.20 In terms of savings, £1.580m of the £2.980m savings targets are either delivered or on track to be delivered, representing 53% of the total savings target with a further 47% or £1.400m with a high risk of not being achieved within this financial year. The table below summarises the progress by saving:

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON DELIVERY OF 2024/25 SAVINGS

Directorate	Approved Saving £m	Green £m	Amber £m	Red £m	Mitigation £m
Reduction in children looked after (CLA) numbers	-0.330	-0.330	0.000	0.000	0.000
Reducing High Cost Residential Care	-1.100	0.000	0.000	-1.100	0.000
Reduction in teachers pension liabilities	-0.200	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000
Re-organisation of Early Help	-0.550	0.000	-0.550	0.000	-0.550
Promoting Independence	-0.300	0.000	0.000	-0.300	0.000
Kingsway buy out	-0.500	0.000	-0.500	0.000	-0.500
TOTAL	-2.980	-0.530	-1.050	-1.400	-1.050

3.21 £1.100m of the Children, Families and Education budget savings is in relation to reducing high cost residential care and £0.300m associated with home to school transport are unlikely to be achieved in year given the extreme pressures on the social care and home to school transport budgets.

Reserves and Balances

3.22 Earmarked reserves represent the money that has been set aside for a clearly defined purpose, and which is available to meet future expenditure in that area. Table 5 below details the reserves which are available.

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF EARMARKED RESERVES

Reserve	Opening Balance £'000	Forecast Use of Reserve £'000	Forecast Contribution to Reserve £'000	Closing Balance £'000
School Improvement	795	0	0	795
Schools Causing Concern	294	0	0	294
SEND OFSTED Inspection Improvement Action Plan	376	-301	0	75
Children's Centre – Outdoor Play	51	0	0	51
Looked After Children Education Services	111	-111	0	0
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	23	0	0	23
SEND - High Needs	110	-110	0	0
YOS - Remand & Mobile Youth Centre	121	0	0	121
DRIVE Safelives & Domestic Abuse Hub	50	0	0	50
Mersey & Cheshire ICS Pilot	20	0	0	20
Total	1,951	-522	0	1,429

3.23 There are no planned transfers into reserves as at Quarter 1. It is anticipated that £0.522m will be utilised in year to help mitigate some of the in year pressures.

Capital Monitoring

3.24 The capital programme remains on target as at Quarter 1, table 6 overleaf shows the breakdown by scheme.

TABLE 6: 2024/25 CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE CAPITAL BUDGETS

Scheme	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Budget 2025/26 £'000	Budget 2026/27 £'000	Budget 2027/28 £'000	Budget 2028/29 £'000
Basic Needs	727	427	-	-	-
Childcare Capital Expansion Fund	604	-	-	-	-
Children's System Development	703	-	-	-	-
Condition/modernisation (SCA)	7,011	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Family Hub Transformation Fund	85	-	-	-	-
Family Support	157	-	-	-	-
High Needs Provision Capital	8,561	-	-	-	-
School Works – Department for Education Ringfenced Receipts	721	722	-	-	-
Transforming Care – Therapeutic Short Breaks	317	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	18,886	3,649	2,500	2,500	2,500

3.25 **School Condition Allocation (SCA)** – to be used to keep school buildings safe and in good working order by addressing poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, and health and safety issues. The allocation includes £1.5m roofing works at various schools, £0.64m for boiler installation works and £0.5m Fire Risk Assessments. Major schemes in 24/25 include Reaburn Primary and Ridgeway CLC.

3.26 **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/High Needs Provision Capital** – To deliver additional classroom provision for SEND pupils across several Special schools. The planned schemes cover Joseph Paxton, Foxfield School and Stanley School.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This is the Quarter 1 budget monitoring report that provides information on the forecast outturn for the Children, Young People and Education Committee for 2024/25. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Policy & Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take

collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget can be reported at the end of the year.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.2 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 5.3 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered, and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 At this time, there are no additional resource implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there will be resource implications, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget for 2024/25 is dependent on a stable financial position. That said, the delivery of the budget is subject to ongoing variables both positive and adverse which imply a level of challenge in achieving this outcome.
- 7.2 In any budget year, there is a risk that operation will not be constrained within relevant budget limits. Under specific circumstances the Section 151 Officer may issue a Section 114 notice, but that position has not been reached at the present time.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in arriving at the governance process for the 2024/25 budget monitoring process and budget setting process.
- 8.2 Since the budget was agreed at Full Council on 26 February, some proposals may have been the subject of further consultation with Members, Customer and Residents. The details of these are included within the individual business cases or are the subject of separate reports to the Committee.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 At this time, there are no further equality implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be equality implications associated with these, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This report has no direct environmental implications; however due regard is given as appropriate in respect of procurement and expenditure decision-making processes that contribute to the outturn position.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 In year activity will have incorporated community wealth implications. Consideration would have taken account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.

- **Making wealth work for local places**
REPORT AUTHOR: Jess Whitley
 (Head of Finance - People)
 email: jessicawhitley@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children, Young People & Education Committee Report 23 Jul 24: Budget Monitoring and Budget Setting Processes Report.

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People & Education Committee	6 March 2024
Children, Young People & Education Committee	1 February 2024
Children, Young People & Education Committee	29 November 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	25 September 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	19 July 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	21 June 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	7 March 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	24 January 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	6 December 2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee	12 October 2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee	21 June 2022

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday 23rd July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the latest performance information for the Children's, Families and Education Directorate. The design and content of the report was developed following discussions with the Chair of the Children, Young People & Education Committee and party spokes at a Performance Monitoring workshop back in March 2021.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and supports the Wirral Plan priority of Brighter Futures for all. This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to note the content of the Performance Report attached in Appendix A and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Children, Young People & Education Committee have the opportunity to monitor, review and challenge performance of the Council's Children's, Families & Education Directorate.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report has been developed in conjunction with the Chair of the Children, Young People & Education Committee and party spokes. Various options were considered before agreeing on a quarterly Performance Report, supported by automated Children's Services data reports.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Performance Report (Appendix A) has been structured around seven indicator groups. The data contained in the report relates to Quarter 4 2023/24 (period ending Mar-24). Where Quarter 4 data was not available, the most recent information has been provided.
- 3.2 Where available, national, regional and statistical neighbour benchmarking data has been included in the report so comparisons can be made.
- 3.3 The supporting narrative in the report has been strengthened with Heads of Service from the Children, Families & Education Directorate providing a narrative to explain trends or changes in performance.

Key performance areas for Members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee to note include:

- 3.4 **Improved timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences** – ongoing work within the Safeguarding Unit and the Locality Teams has led to 75.8% of conferences being held in time compared to 59.5% during the same period last year.
- 3.5 **Timeliness of assessments continues to improve** – this is the result of regular performance meetings and increased management oversight through the use of Power BI. 76% of assessments were completed within timescale this quarter compared to 71% last quarter.
- 3.6 The current rate of **youth re-offending** stands at 75% at the end of quarter 4. Whilst this figure looks high, it actually equates to just eight young people re-offending between January 2024 – March 2024.
- 3.7 There continues to be emphasis and increased management oversight of **visits completed within statutory timescale** for Children in Need, Children Protection and Children Looked After with performance this quarter being 70.2%, 85% and 91.4% respectively.

- 3.8 For Children Looked After, we have seen improved compliance with Health Assessment Reviews with 91.2% being completed last year compared to just 79% the year before. Also 97.3% of Strength & Difficulties Questionnaires were completed during the year, supporting young people with good mental health and wellbeing.
- 3.9 The percentage of Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued within the 20-week statutory timescale has fallen to 18%. Continued sufficiency restraints and pressures on schools have meant that the SEND Referral and Assessment Team's focus was on successfully meeting the statutory February 15th deadline for transfer reviews. This had a real impact on the team's ability to maintain output of new EHCPs. Also, the early part of 2024 has seen a focus on completing plans that had exceeded 20 weeks, so despite the decline in 20-week completions, for January-March as a whole, 167 plans were finalised in 2024 compared to 157 in 2023. There are plans in place to address poor performance in this area including revised Governance arrangements, a detailed Recovery Plan, a restructure of the SEND Referral and Assessment Teams and the implementation of a new Quality Assurance Framework.
- 3.10 The number of children Electively Home Educated continues to rise. In Wirral we have currently have 387 young people who are Electively Home Educated. Whilst this number appears high, Wirral is inline with other Local Authorities in the City Region.
- 3.11 The percentage of two year olds benefitting from funded early education has increased to 94% from just 77.89% last year.
- 3.12 Positive impact of the Social Care Workforce Strategy. There has been a reduction in social care vacancies, a reduction in the number of leavers and a reduction in social care sickness rates.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any financial implications arising from this report should considered by the Children, Families & Education Directorate Management Team.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Performance data for EHCP compliance shows that the Local Authority is not meeting its responsibility to finalise plans within the 20-week timeframe.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Any resource implications arising from this report should considered by the Children, Families & Education Directorate Management Team.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 A key area of risk arising from this report relates to Wirral's Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Service. In particular, compliance rates for statutory Education & Health Care Plans issued within 20 weeks.

7.2 Mitigating actions include revised Governance arrangements, a detailed Recovery Plan, a restructure of the SEND Referral and Assessment Teams and the implementation of a new Quality Assurance Framework.

7.3 Wirral's Local Area SEND Partnership Board have oversight of this risk and the associated mitigating actions.

7.4 SEND and other key risks faced by the Directorate are recorded in the Children, Families & Education Risk Register which is regularly monitored and reviewed.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 A Performance monitoring session was held with the chair of the Children, Young People & Education Committee, and party spokes on 4th March 2021 to review current performance monitoring arrangements and to define a new, improved approach.

8.2 A further Performance Management workshop was held on 12th July 2022 with the then Chair of the Children, Young People & Education Committee, and party spokes where they received a demonstration of Power BI and shown what data is available via the interactive reports.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity. There are no equality issues arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental or climate implications generated by the recommendations in this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Children's Services generally impacts positively on community wealth through commissioning arrangements of local providers to support and improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable residents.

11.2 Parents benefit from early years funding for their children from the age of two. Parents and schools can also benefit from additional funding for those pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

11.3 We monitor the number of young people in employment, education or training. Those young people in employment will receive a paid salary whilst some of those in training, such as apprenticeships, will receive a reduced salary whilst they are studying.

REPORT AUTHOR: Tricia Thomas
Head of Operations (interim), Children's Services
Tel: 0151 666 3630
email: triciathomas@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Children's Service Performance Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Data and performance information held in Children's Services Management Information Systems and accessed via the Council's business intelligence system Power BI.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People & Education Committee in accordance with Section 3.2(f) of its Terms of Reference, providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q4 Performance Report	21/06/2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q3 Performance Report	07/03/2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q2 Performance Report	12/10/2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q1 Performance Report	21/06/2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q4 Performance Report	10/03/2022
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q3 Performance Report	23/11/2021
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q2 Performance Report	13/09/2021
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Q1 Performance Report	15/06/2021
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children's Services Performance Management	17/03/2020

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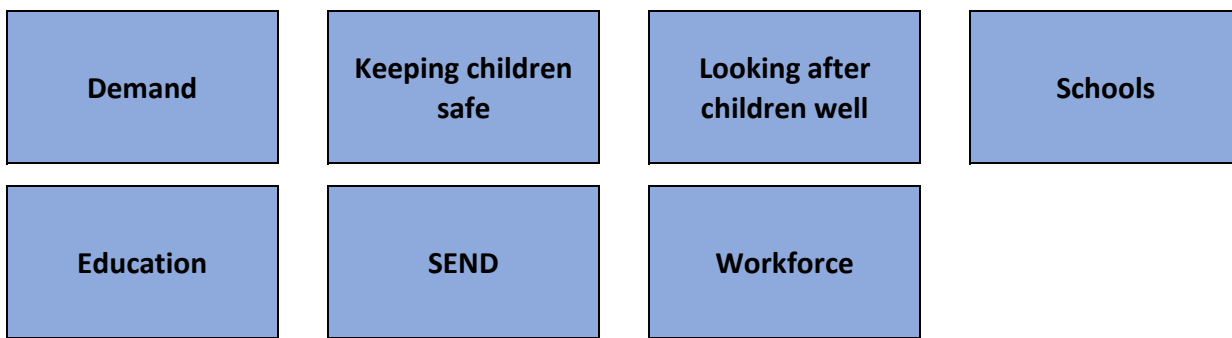


CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE


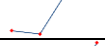

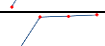
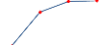
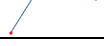

Wednesday 19th June 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Children, Young People & Education Committee - indicator sets



Demand

	Year-end			2023/24				National (22/23)	North West (22/23)	Stat Neighbours (22/23)	Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Social care contacts	10149	10732	12252	5810	5592	6040	6604	-	-	-	
Early Help contacts	12199	11128	9148	2446	2399	3050	3031	-	-	-	
Referrals to social care	3030	3254	3365	1043	989	987	1117	-	-	-	
% of domestic abuse referrals to children's social care	23.5%	27.3%	19.4%	20.3%	26.8%	22.7%	23.6%	-	-	-	
Child In Need rate per 10,000 population	379.9	392.2	399.8	417.1	428.5	428.7	429.1	342.7	386.8	447.3	
Child Protection rate per 10,000 population	47.0	58.6	57.1	51.5	55.3	56.5	56.6	43.2	49.1	57.1	
Children Looked After rate per 10,000 population	126.0	121.0	118.0	117.1	118.7	118.4	118.3	71.0	96.0	111.0	

Supporting narrative

Contacts - contacts into children's social care this quarter have continued to increase. At the end of Q4 contacts are 13% higher than Q1 figures. Towards the end of Q4 we have seen a marked increase in concerns relating to parental mental health.

If we review the annual figures for 2023/24 the Integrated Front Door received 24,103 contacts. A third (7,729) of all contacts received were from police with 60% (4,649) relating to domestic abuse. I would also note that 68% (16,352) did not meet the threshold for Level 3 or Level 4 services with 15% (3,596) of children requiring multi agency support through Early Help Level 3 and 17% (4,155) of children requiring statutory intervention at Level 4.


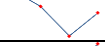
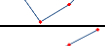
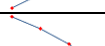
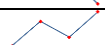
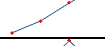
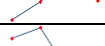
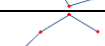

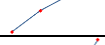


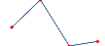

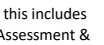
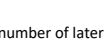
Referrals - along with the increase in contacts we have seen referral rates increase during Q4 to 1,117 in comparison with Q1, Q2 and Q3

A further piece of work will be completed, alongside the safeguarding partnership to review and oversee the application of threshold with a view to achieving consistency and collective understanding across the partnership.

Child Protection

We are ending Q4 with a slight increase from the previous quarters, but our annual figures have reduced to 55 per ten thousand from 57.1 per ten thousand in 2022/23. This brings us in line with our statistical neighbours, North West and England average.

Keeping children safe

	Year-end			2023/24				National (22/23)	North West (22/23)	Stat Neighbours (22/23)	Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
% of Early Help cases closed with outcomes met	91.6%	83.6%	88.2%	86.5%	79.9%	82.6%	85.3%	-	-	-	
% Repeat referrals within 12 months period	23.5%	21.5%	23.3%	25.6%	23.8%	20.6%	23.1%	22.4%	22.4%	21.3%	
% Assessments completed within timescale	78.8%	81.1%	75.5%	75.0%	68.0%	71.0%	76.0%	82.0%	79.0%	80.0%	
Children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry Rate per 10,000 YTD	179.7	207.3	214.9	55.7	102.5	158.6	209.6	191.6	209.9	274.5	
% of children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry that led to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)	35.7%	37.4%	34.4%	33.3%	32.6%	31.7%	30.1%	-	-	-	
% Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) taking place in the month and within timescales	57.6%	75.6%	59.5%	61.8%	71.0%	65.1%	74.6%	78.0%	80.0%	83.0%	
Child Protection Plans ceased Rate per 10,000 YTD	51.3	63.5	63.4	18.3	27.9	42.8	56.0	54.3	59.3	75.8	
% of children on second or subsequent Child Protection Plan	28.7%	23.0%	31.4%	9.8%	19.8%	35.4%	20.2%	23.6%	23.8%	22.5%	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child in Need (CIN)	-	82.8%	78.9%	79.7%	83.7%	67.1%	70.2%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child Protection (CP)	-	81.4%	74.7%	78.4%	85.4%	89.8%	85.5%	-	-	-	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Children Looked After (CLA)	-	90.5%	90.7%	91.9%	91.4%	95.1%	91.4%	-	-	-	
Reduce first time entrants into the criminal justice system (rate per 100,000)	219	114	86	28	80	118	141	-	-	-	
Reduce young people re-offending (%)	40	41.9	41	55.6%	44.4%	18.2%	75%	-	-	-	
Reduce the use of Custody (rate per 1,000)	0.07	0.16	0.16	0.07	0.1	0.1	0.13	-	-	-	
Children currently open to MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation)				58	51	53	56	-	-	-	
Children removed from MACE due to lowered risk				15	21	11	12	-	-	-	

Repeat referrals – there has been a slight percentage reduction, however we are not yet where we need to be. The highest percentage of repeat referrals is as a result of domestic abuse, although some of our figures have been increased due to organised crime activity. As part of performance monitoring we are now looking at our repeat referrals data monthly, this includes team managers completing audits on families that have a repeat referral in the month of receipt back in to the service. This will be reviewed by the Integrated Front Door and Assessment & Intervention Operational Leads and Heads of Service to identify key themes and actions.

Assessments completed in timescale - Q4 evidences a slight improvement but further focused work to be completed in this area to make greater improvements. A significant number of later referrals have been impacted on from workers being sick or leaving. Social Work case loads continue to cause a challenge in the timely completion of assessments.

Section 47 enquiries - there has been a slight decline in the percentage of S47 enquiries completed this quarter. Of these approximately 32% progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference. A substantial proportion of S47 enquiries have an outcome of continue with assessment/current plan.

Initial Child Protection conferences - during this quarter 124 Initial Child Protection Conferences were held. Of these, 75.8% (94) were in timescale with the remaining 30 that were held out of timescale due to the timeliness of reports or available of parent/carers and social worker. The child protection chairs continue to ensure interim safety planning is in place for children prior to a formal multi agency child protection plan being implemented. Performance will be reviewed at monthly Performance Management & Quality Assurance meetings.

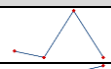
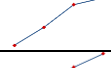
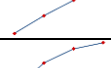
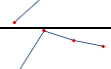
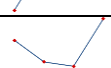
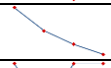
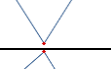
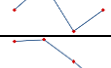

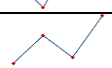
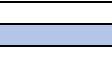
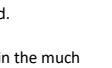
Child Protection Plans - during Q4, 90 child protection plans were ceased. We have had 15 children on a CPP for less than 3 months. In reviewing these cases 5 children became looked after however 10 were stepped down to a child in need plan. Audits will be undertaken to understand the application of threshold in these cases given the short duration of the child protection plan. The service will be undertaking a deeper analysis of children subject to Child Protection Plans to ensure our current practice is robust and effective.

Repeat Child Protection Plans - the percentage of children subject to repeat plans has reduced during Q4 to 20.2% from 35.4% in Q3. Our performance is in line with our statistical neighbours, northwest and England average.

Child protection visits completed in time, there are a number of children where visits have been over by 1 or 2 days. There are some visits where families avoid the social worker.

Youth re-offending - the 75% re-offending rate equates to just eight young people between January 2024 - March 2024 of which six of these (75%) had re-offended.

Looking after children well

	Year-end			2023/24				National (22/23)	North West (22/23)	Stat Neighbours (22/23)	Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
% CLA visits completed within timescale	-	90.5%	90.7%	91.9%	91.4%	95.1%	91.4%	-	-	-	
% Completed health assessment reviews YTD	87.0%	91.0%	78.0%	37.7%	58.0%	83.3%	91.2%	89.0%	92.0%	92.6%	
% Completed dental checks YTD	31.0%	86.0%	79.0%	23.6%	43.7%	61.2%	76.8%	76.0%	77.0%	78.8%	
% Completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) YTD	98.0%	96.0%	97.3%	68.2%	84.7%	93.4%	97.3%	75.0%	80.0%	79.0%	
% of CLA adopted in year	15.0%	8.0%	10.7%	4.3%	11.6%	10.1%	9.2%	9.0%	9.0%	11.0%	
% of CLA placed with Foster carers	71.0%	71.0%	68.8%	69.6%	69.1%	69.0%	70.1%	68.0%	66.0%	66.1%	
Timeliness of Adoption process A10 (426 days national target) Average days	363	809	652	700	633	594	565	not published	not published	not published	
% Care leavers in suitable accommodation (Age 19-21)	92.0%	94.0%	94.0%	97.0%	96.0%	97.0%	97.0%	88.0%	90.0%	87.6%	
% Care leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET) (Age 19-21)	56.0%	54.0%	58.6%	59.5%	62.1%	57.4%	59.5%	56.0%	54.0%	54.6%	
Missing Episodes	918	1385	1281	384	390	318	236	-	-	-	
CAMHS referrals seen within 6 weeks	67.6%	67.6%	N/A	42.5%	26.9%	52.9%	43.8%	-	-	-	
CAMHS referrals seen within 18 weeks	96.4%	96.4%	N/A	67.9%	80.8%	70.6%	90.0%	-	-	-	

Supporting narrative

There has been a drop in performance around CLA visits this is due to some staffing capacity and recording issues across the services which has now been addressed.










Improving Health Outcomes meetings has ensured that significant focus has been in place regarding attendance at health appointments and SDQ's this is reflected in the much improved data in this area. Consistent focus is now in place which should see continued improvement in these areas going forward.







Timeliness of Adoption processes has improved slightly, however there remains some challenges within the court arena regarding delays in the final adoption order being granted. This is felt to be in part due to the judiciary trying to ensure that adoption orders are appellant free at the final order stage.





CLA placed in foster care has risen slightly in Q4 and remains above regional and national averages.

Care Leavers in suitable accommodation remains consistently high and recognises the joint working between Leaving Care and colleagues in Housing.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

	Year-end			2023/24				Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
% Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 week timescale (Excluding Exceptions)	58%	24%	36.60%	49%	44%	40%	18%	50.70%	62.70%	66.54%	
% of requests that went to tribunal	9.47%	8.23%	2.65%	3.70%	0.03%	9.06%	6.19%	-	-	-	
% of Children Looked After with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	8.68%	9.26%	19.90%	20.50%	21.10%	21.90%	22.90%	30.20%	26.70%	28.06%	
% of Children In Need with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	17.59%	16.45%	20.80%	17.10%	17.20%	19.10%	19%	-	-	-	
% of Child Protection with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	5.93%	6.45%	8.80%	10.10%	11.30%	12.70%	10.70%	-	-	-	
% of Early Help Episodes with (SEND) Special Educational needs and disabilities	25.82%	26.44%	30.40%	30.64%	32.60%	30.30%	31.60%	-	-	-	
% of Children Looked After with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	18.22%	19.29%	16.10%	15.80%	15.50%	16.50%	17.10%	27.20%	26.50%	26.37%	
% of Children In Need with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	15.83%	16.20%	14.30%	14.11%	13.10%	14.40%	12.90%	-	-	-	
% of Child Protection with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	19.88%	21.51%	21.20%	24.20%	23.70%	19%	20.90%	-	-	-	

	Year-end			2022/23 Summer Term	2023/24 Autumn Term	2023/24 Spring Term	Current National	Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23					
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan- Overall School Attendance %	90.60%	88.90%	87.30%	86%	87.60%	86.40%	87.60%	
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan Overall Persistent absence %	25.60%	37.10%	27.20%	28.80%	34.60%	32.20%	34.60%	
Number of pupils with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan who are electively home educated	18	12	20	15	17	17	-	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall School Attendance %	93.40%	91%	89%	88.30%	89.70%	88.60%	0.9	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall Persistent absence %	19.30%	28.60%	23.80%	27.40%	29.80%	26.50%	29.80%	
Number of pupils with (SEN) Special Educational Need support who are electively home educated	39	54	59	62	28	26	-	

	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23	Current National	Current North West	Current Stat neighbours	Trend
Key Stage 2 (RWM) Reading, Writing, Maths EHCP - % at Expected Level	6%	2.20%	2.50%	5%	8%	8%	8.30%	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	-0.85	-1.12	-1.33	-1.02	-1.12	-1.28	-1.27	
Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing, Maths (SEN) Special Educational Need support - % at Expected Level	21%	23%	20.70%	25%	24%	23%	24.50%	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (SEN) Special Educational Need support	-0.29	-0.42	-0.46	-0.44	-0.45	-0.59	-0.59	


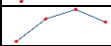
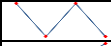
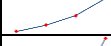

Supporting narrative

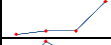
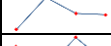


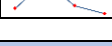
The first quarter of 2024 has been challenging. Continued sufficiency restraints and pressures on schools have meant that the SEND Referral and Assessment Team's focus was on successfully meeting the statutory February 15th deadline for phase transfer reviews (N1-N2 and Y6-Y7) had a real impact on the teams to maintain output of new EHCPs. The early part of 2024 has seen a focus on completing plans that had exceeded 20 weeks, so despite the decline in 20-week completions, for January-March as a whole, 167 plans were finalised in 2024 compared to 157 in 2023.

Over the same period a new manager has been recruited on a secondment basis to lead the referral and assessment team. Since starting in February, the manager has been focussed on recruitment into vacant posts in the team. This prioritisation has yielded success and there are, as of 19th April, only two vacancies, down from 10 expected at this point in the year. This has been achieved through agency staff, secondments, and existing staff deciding they want to remain with Wirral. However, the prioritisation of recruitment will have affected oversight and support and impacted in the short term on performance results.

The Head of SEND has developed an EHCP and Annual Review Compliance and Recovery Plan. This was presented to, and approved by, the new Local Area SEND Partnership Group on the 29th April 2024. Some of the actions contained in plan, aimed at improving performance compliance rates for EHCPs and Annual Reviews include a full restructure of the SEND Referral and Assessment Teams and the implementation of a new Quality Assurance Framework for EHCPs.

Schools

	Year-end			2023/24				Current National	Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
% School capacity - places available vs pupil numbers (school)	89.60%	90.10%	90.10%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	
% Exclusions - suspensions	4.06%	0.09	0.04	1.72%	2.16%	2.35%	2.10%	3.13%	
% Exclusions - permanent	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04%	0.03%	0.04%	0.03%	0.04%	
Number of children known to be electively home educated	275	254	296	286	309	344	407	-	
Number of Pupils who are not in receipt of full-time education and subject of an agreed part time timetable (Indicator once named - Pupils who are missing more than 25hrs of education a week (CME25))	171	254	317	99	69	129	387	-	

	Year-end			2023/24				Current National	Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
% of school age pupils eligible for (FSM) Free school meal	24%	27.59%	28.90%	28.90%	28.95%	28.95%	29.39%	23.80%	
Overall School Attendance %	94.90%	93.30%	91.80%	91.20%	93.60%	92.40%	92.30%	93.70%	
Overall Unauthorised Absence %	1.50%	1.90%	2.70%	3.30%	2.10%	3.80%	2.50%	0.0	
Overall Persistent Absence %	0.1	20.10%	27.90%	23.80%	19.60%	22.30%	23.80%	0.2	
Overall School Attendance Open to Social Care %	-	-	82.60%	82.90%	0.9	0.8	0.8	-	

Supporting narrative

The number of part time timetables continues to rise due to more schools making us aware of young people who are on reduced timetables. Locality Attendance Officers are undertaking a data cleansing exercise to ensure part time timetable reviews are tracked accurately in our case management system and are closed down when the plan ends. The Locality Attendance officers are gaining more confidence in challenging schools where the paperwork has not been completed properly.

The number of children who are Electively Home Educated continues to rise. Our numbers remain inline with other Liverpool City region authorities.

Suspensions are currently well below the national average. This is partly due to the greater use of interventions by schools alongside support and strategies and advice from the Local Authority. Permanent Exclusions are mostly inline across the Local Authority per quarter and below the current national average. There has been a greater increase in the use of managed moves facilitated by the Inclusion Team to reduce the amount of Permanent Exclusions. There has also been a greater increase in support from the Local Authority Inclusion Team in response to Schools at risk of Permanent Exclusion protocols and the graduated approach.

Education

	Year-end			2023/24				Trend
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
% of under 5's who are engaged with the Early Years Service	45%	51.11%	43.64%	44%	45%	45%	45%	
% of under 5's who have sustained engagement the Early Years Service (3 of more)	58%	60.50%	47.94%	48%	48%	49%	47%	
% of 2 year olds benefitting from funded early education	76%	83%	77.89%	88%	88%	96%	94%	
% of 3 year olds benefitting from funded early education	90%	91%	90.96%	89%	89%	89%	85%	

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Current National	Trend
% of schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted	83%	83%	81.60%	83.20%	84%	89.7%	
% of early years settings good or better	98%	98%	97%	97.80%	Not available yet	96%	
% of young people aged 16 and 17 who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or Not Known	5.00%	5.10%	4.10%	4.50%	Not available yet	5.20%	

	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23	Current NCER National	Trend
Foundation Stage - % achieving a good level of development	70.5%	69.3%	62.9%	65.2%	67.2%	
Foundation Stage - % of children who are looked after achieving a good level of development	52.2%	59.5%	48.10%	42.9%	41%	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers achieving good level of development in early years foundation stage profile	17.7	23.5	20.2	19.5	17.9	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile	18%	23%	21.5%	20.2%	20%	
% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	60%	60%	52%	55.6%	60%	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the 'expected standard' in English, reading, English writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2	23%	22%	24.1%	27.2%	22%	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4	0.73	0.84	0.92	0.44	0.6	
Progress 8 Score for Wirral	0.03	0.01	-0.03	-0.11	-0.02	

To be published

Two-year-disadvantaged funding take up - this is taken from the spring headcount which always dips slightly potentially due to the Christmas period and the number of weeks in the term for parents to organise a place.

Three-year-old funding take up - this appears to be lower than anticipated, the data will be reviewed to understand and plan next steps.

Early years settings - since last reported, 1 provider has received a requires improvement judgement. Wirral currently has 3 requires improvement childminders and 2 not met wrap around provision. All providers are receiving tailored support based on their inspection report. In the next 6 months the majority of these providers should have been re-inspected, it is hoped all will receive a good or above judgement.


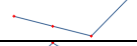



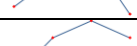
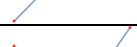
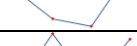

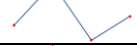

Registration with Early Childhood Service (ECS) remains high at 90%, ECS is a more targeted service and now tries to support families who are identified as needing support: those receiving statutory support from Children's Social Care, children entitled to 2 year funding and those living in targeted areas. Take up of services from this cohort is 67%. Quarter 4 saw increase of those families supported at CIN and CP engaging with ECS.

Good Level of Development The figure has increased by 2.3% compared to the previous year and the gap to national has narrowed to 2%, the school improvement has offered significant support to support early years practitioners over the last year and we will monitor the impact as the 2024 results are published. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged has also reduced in the last academic year by 0.7% but the Wirral is still higher than the national average by 1.6%

Key Stage 2 outcomes The number of children achieving the expected standard at KS2 has increased by 3.6% and the gap to national has reduced to 4.4%, this is the smallest gap in the last 5 years. We have seen an increase in the number of children achieving the expected standard in Maths, which has been a key focus for the last academic year.

Key Stage 4 outcomes Progress has reduced at KS4 has reduced from -0.03 to -0.11 which is a reduction of 0.08 and the gap to national has increased to 0.09. The Gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged. This has reduced from 0.92 to 0.44, we now have a smaller gap than national by 0.16.

Workforce

	Year-end		2023/24				National	North West	Statistical Neighbours	Trend
	2021/22	2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Social Workers	30%	26%	25%	22%	22%	23%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff Social Workers	22%	21%	20%	19%	18%	22%	-	-	-	
New starters - Social Workers	20	33	3	13	7	4	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - Social Workers	33	36	3	6	4	4	-	-	-	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence - Social Workers	16.46	14.82	3.35	2.97	3.41	3.19	-	-	-	
Average caseload for social worker	15.5	14.96	15.5	16.17	16.66	15.32	16.3	17.9	17	
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts Children's Services Directorate	20%	15%	15%	17%	18%	17%	-	-	-	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff Children's Services Directorate	6.29%	6.10%	5.60%	4.80%	4.60%	6.10%	-	-	-	
New starters - Children's Services Directorate	98	93	13	33	14	31	-	-	-	
Retention of staff – number of leavers - Children's Services Directorate	102	86	18	32	13	21	-	-	-	
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence Children's Services Directorate	12.55	12.06	3.19	4.1	4	3.4	-	-	-	

Supporting narrative

In the last financial year, the data shows that the Social Work Workforce Strategy is starting to really take hold. If we look at recruitment and retention (turnover) for 2023/24, the Net for social workers = +10 social workers through the door, compared to 2022/23 = -3 social workers, 2021/22 = -13.

Similarly, the vacancy rate 2023/24 = average 19.75%, compared to 2022/23 = 26%, 2021/22 = 30%.

Sickness in Social Care for 2023/24 has also seen a similar trend, with an outturn of 12.92 FTE days lost compared with 2022/23 = 14.82 FTE, 2021/22 = 16.46 FTE.

The data for the whole of Children's Services is quite steady across all parameters, except for sickness which has rose from the last financial year. However when you look at the post filled over time (which isn't outlined above), the start to mid 2022/23 the Directorate had 829 people in post, they now have around 870 (50 extra staff onboard), and have had this level of staffing for a number of months now, and this will impact the sickness figures.

Acronym	Description
CIN	Child in need
CP	Child protection
CPP	Child protection plan
CLA	Child looked after
DA	Domestic Abuse
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
MACE	Multi-Agency Child Exploitation
SDQ	Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire
EET	Education, Employment & Training
NEET	Not in Education, Employment & Training
CAMHs	Child & adolescent mental health service
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
GLD	Good Level of Development
FSM	Free School Meals
EHE	Electively Home Educated
DfE	Department for Education
CYP	Children & Young People
PA	Persistent Absence
FTE	Full Time Equivalent

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday 23 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	EARLY YEARS QUALITY AND SUFFICIENCY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN’S, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report covers key updates for the early years’ service, including two-year funding take up for the disadvantaged entitlement and working family’s entitlement. The two-year funding take-up for disadvantaged entitlement has decreased however it is thought that families potentially eligible for both working families and disadvantaged entitlements have applied through working family’s entitlement. This is being explored further so we have a system to ensure that families take up the most relevant entitlement.

The report also includes two models, the first the Family Information Service (FIS) in terms of meeting section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006, which places a duty on Local Authorities to share information on childcare provision and services. The model to support early years providers is also attached, this details the work of the quality improvement and training team to support providers and ensure all provision is of the highest quality. An update on the wrap around programme has also been included; supply and demand mapping has been completed and a proposed delivery plan has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) to approval.

This report affects all wards

This report is not a key decision

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is requested to note the report and receive a further update following further rollout of the early years entitlement funding.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The report is to highlight key updates to the committee to raise awareness of the ongoing work within the early years.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The roll out of early years funding is a statutory responsibility and no other options are applicable

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 **2-year-old uptake:** In 2013 the government introduced 15 hours a week funded childcare provision for two-year-old who were possibly disadvantaged. The aim of the policy was to improve the reduce the early years attainment gap and ensure children were better prepared to start formal schooling. The government has now introduced two-year-old funding for working families from April 2024, to support families into work with childcare costs. Families can be eligible for both entitlements and government guidance is to apply disadvantaged entitlement to families who meet the criteria, as they cannot fall out of eligibility for the disadvantaged entitlement. There are also families that will not be eligible either entitlement, children and families will be supported with early years opportunities through family hubs. The table below details the take of the two-year-old entitlements.

Two-old entitlement	Codes issued	Eligible children / codes validated	Take up	Percentage
Disadvantaged	N/A	934	643	69%
Working	1486	1257	1233	98%

- 3.2 The disadvantaged entitlement has seen a significant decrease in take up. The data is currently being interrogated but the initial hypothesis is that families eligible for both entitlements have taken up under the working entitlements. The team are currently exploring how we identify families who are eligible for both entitlements to ensure they are assigned to the appropriate one. The Department for Education (DfE) predicted we would need 1910 places, so roughly 66% of families gained a code with 98% of families taking their code to an early year's provider to validate their code and secure a place. As 98% of families took their place it is assumed that the 24 families either took up disadvantaged entitlement or changed their mind on taking up a place. For Autumn term we have had 272 codes issued for two-year-old working entitlement and 425 codes issued for under two-year-old working entitlement.
- 3.3 **Family Information Service (FIS):** Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to establish and maintain a Family Information Service (FIS) which provides information on the provision of childcare services which might benefit parents, prospective parents or children and young people. Wirral has a hybrid

approach with many services supporting different elements of the service. Please see attached FIS model for clarification.

- 3.4 At the heart of the FIS offer is a digital offer through the Family Toolbox, with information about services and how to find the right childcare providers. Currently the Family Toolbox has links to the council website for information on childcare providers. Once the new Early Years and Education System (EYES) software is implemented it is hoped there will be a search function for families to find childcare. Also at the heart is the Family Hub offer where families can drop in to find services they need or find out about childcare providers.
- 3.5 Supporting the Family Toolbox are other online services where families can gain information or support., linking to relevant websites such as Zillo for young people or SENDLO for families with a child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND). Families can also phone or email for information. Various social media platform also shares information such as My Child Can and Wirral's Twitter account. The Family Hubs are supported by other face to face services, for example through the early years team brokerage service, with knowledge of different types of provision they can support families to find the right provider. The children's centres offer advice and information to parents and are fundamental in promoting entitlements to parents. The early years team regularly attend events parents are attending to share information on childcare providers and other services that might be beneficial. The hybrid offer is to enable all families to access the information and advice they need in a timely manner.
- 3.6 **Support for Early Years Providers:** The Quality Improvement and Training Team have developed a holistic offer for early years providers to access, designed to ensure the right level of support is available. With 98.09% of early years providers judged good or above by Ofsted it is important that the service is proactive to ensure providers can maintain this and reactive to ensure any changes to provision are supported as quickly as possible- the support offer is therefore very much based on a premise that involves empowering providers to make sustained changes and to embed quality practice. The attached model details what support is available for providers at each level, however, is also flexible to allow for meeting individual needs in each instance. As the universal offer details what every provider can receive, the targeted offer is available to identified providers for example a new manager. The specialist offer is for settings that have received a less than good inspection judgement from Ofsted. A Quality Officer is assigned to work with the setting on a weekly basis to address concerns and make improvements as efficiently as possible.
- 3.7 The Quality Improvement and Training Team have released the third iteration of our Effective Practice Quality Mark (EPQM) from April 24, with two separate course syllabus- one for childminders and one for settings. This year's courses have been designed with three criteria in mind- feedback from the sector, Ofsted trends and changes to Early Years including the early years funding entitlement expansion. We have utilised a mixture of internal/external facilitators, all based in the Northwest to ensure that local context is at the heart of training, allowing providers to really relate to the content. A blended offer has also been created, incorporating both virtual and face to face courses, delivered at a variety of times including evenings- this has been chosen to ensure the training is as accessible as possible. Courses in this year's syllabus include inspection readiness, coaching, self-regulation, and learning/development for children 0-2.

- 3.8 The EPQM syllabus sits alongside our core offer of training that we deliver on a recurring basis to support the sector. This includes WellComm training- focused on practical skills to use the toolkit and effective use of Testwise. As well as Curriculum courses to help settings develop their own unique educational approach. Termly cluster meetings are also delivered, designed to bring the sector together to receive key updates- both from the team and external partners such as the DfE, Public Health and Ofsted.
- 3.9 Since the beginning of May 2024 the Quality Improvement and Training team have also been fielding Operation Encompass notifications, working in partnership with Merseyside Police to roll out the process through the Early Years sector. To date we have received 23 individual notifications which have all been passed on to providers, ensuring that children within homes where parental conflict occurs appropriate support is provided. In the main providers have been aware of family difficulties and are supporting each child whilst also monitoring the situation. For the small number of providers that were not aware of family difficulties, the settings have acted promptly to support children and monitor the situation. To co-ordinate Operation Encompass notifications moving forward, an Early Years Inclusive Placement Officer has been recruited. Once inducted, the postholder will develop the support around Operation Encompass notifications ensuring settings are being as proactive as possible were settings have concerns around parental conflict, whilst also ensuring the right support is put in place for children.
- 3.10 **Wrap around provision expansion:** In March 2023 the government announced the ambition that all parents of children aged between 5-11 wanting to access wrap around childcare are able to do so during term time. The aim of the programme is to over supply the market to create the demand over the two-year life of the implementation programme. The funding is tapered so will reduce as parents take up the offer. The expectation is that 50% of places will be delivered by September 2024.
- 3.11 The early years team have mapped supply and demand across Wirral and have drafted a delivery plan. Wirral currently has 32 schools that meet the full provision criteria, 61 schools that have partial provision and 8 schools with no provision. The 61 schools with partial provision; the majority need to extend their hours to 8am till 6pm and 8 schools need to develop new after school provision. 7 of the schools that need to develop wrap around provision are special schools which adds some complexity to ensure children's needs are met. It is anticipated that Wirral will create 970 places that meet the DfE criteria.
- 3.12 Whilst all schools are encouraged to engage in the project if they can evidence that their community of parents do not want to change their provision, they do not have to take up the offer. Childcare works on behalf of DfE are currently reviewing the delivery plan once approved work will commence on liaising with schools to determine next steps for their provision.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The council has a responsibility to distribute funding received from the Department for Education via the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

4.2 The council has a requirement to meet the approved funding as decided by schools forum in relation to early years funding.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The council has a statutory responsibility to maintain sufficient childcares places across to meet the demands of the local area. On a three year basis the council will produce an annual report in relation to child care sufficiency.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The council must maintain the required staffing resource to distribute relevant funding to education providers.

6.2 The council supports local early years providers with support in relation to training, guidance, and opportunities for wider partnership work. This is delivered through Early Years Quality team.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Schools may not engage in the wrap around programme reducing the anticipated number of new places being created. In order to mitigate this risk, we have taken a funding allocation approach rather than expect schools to apply for funding to encourage participation.

7.2 Schools with limited provision may not be able to change staff hours to accommodate quickly enough to enable places to be available from September 2024, which in turn could mean the council does not achieve 50% of new places being created by September 2024. To mitigate this risk, we are looking at having alternative delivery models schools could adopt.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The wrap programme has a project group which includes school headteachers from each school cluster and the primary headteacher consultant to keep schools updated. The school forum also has an early years sub group which includes early years providers and schools representatives to liaise with around encouraging take up of two-year-funding. Children's centres also assertively target eligible families for two-year funding to encourage take up.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Not applicable

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The generation of further opportunities for growth in the Early Years sector allows further employment opportunities across the borough. To support this activity an early years jobs fair will be taking place in the summer term.
- 11.2 The jobs fair will allow residents to access information in relation to training, apprenticeships and employment in the early years sector, the fair will be supported by training providers and employers.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Sarah Harper / James Backhouse**
(Interim Operations Manager: Early Years / Assistant Director:
Education)
telephone: 0151 666 3989 / 0151 666 3909

email: sarahharper@wirral.gov.uk /
jamesbackhouse@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: FIS Model June 2024
Appendix 2: QIT Team Offer to Early Years Providers

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Early Education and childcare: Statutory Guidance for local authorities. January 2024
[Early education and childcare \(applies from 1 April 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/Early_education_and_childcare_(applies_from_1_April_2024)_-GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf)

National wrap around childcare programme handbook. February 2024
[National Wraparound Childcare Programme Handbook - a guide for local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/National_Wraparound_Childcare_Programme_Handbook_-_a_guide_for_local_authorities_(publishing.service.gov.uk).pdf)

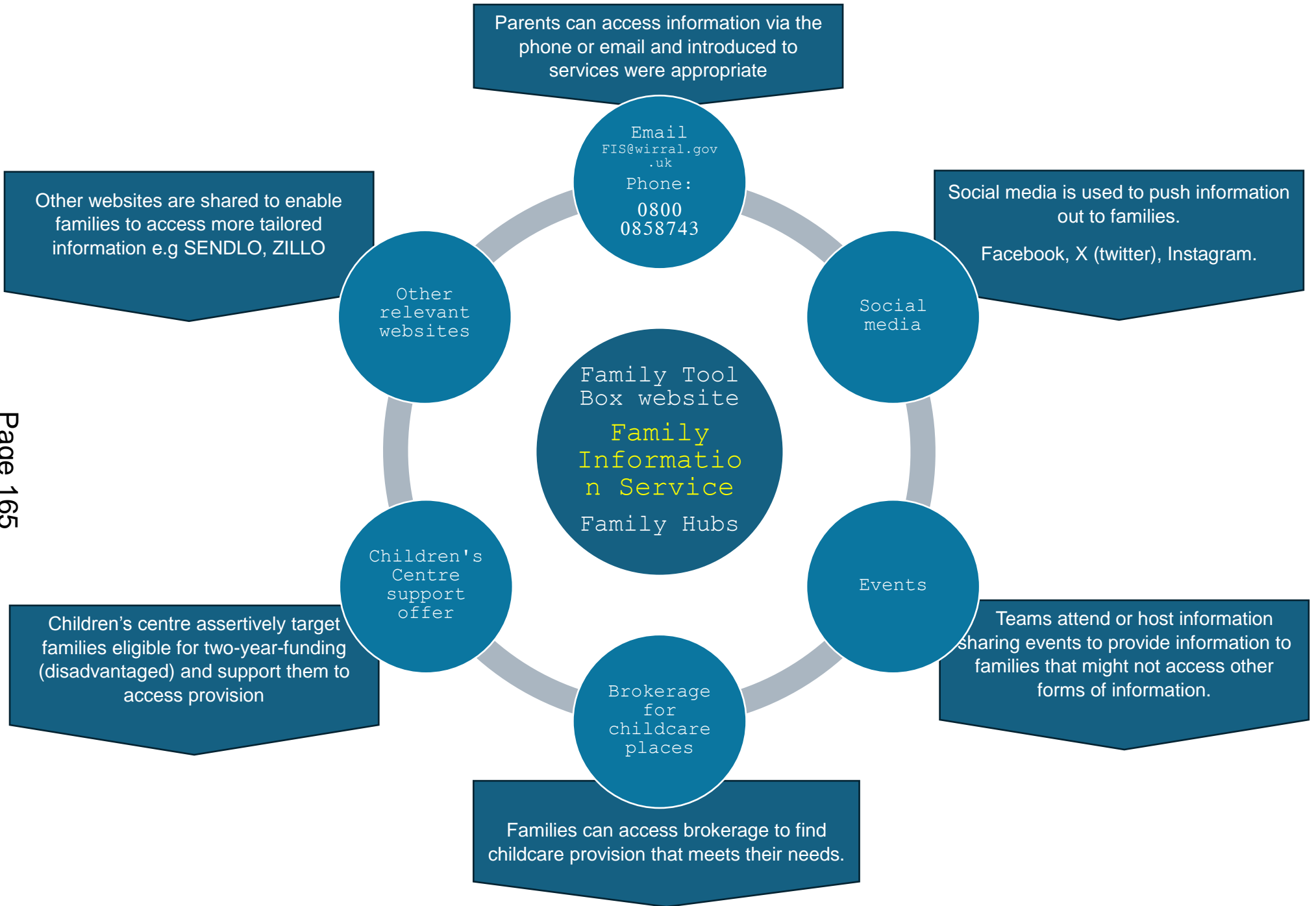
TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People & Education Committee in accordance with Section A of its Terms of Reference, exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

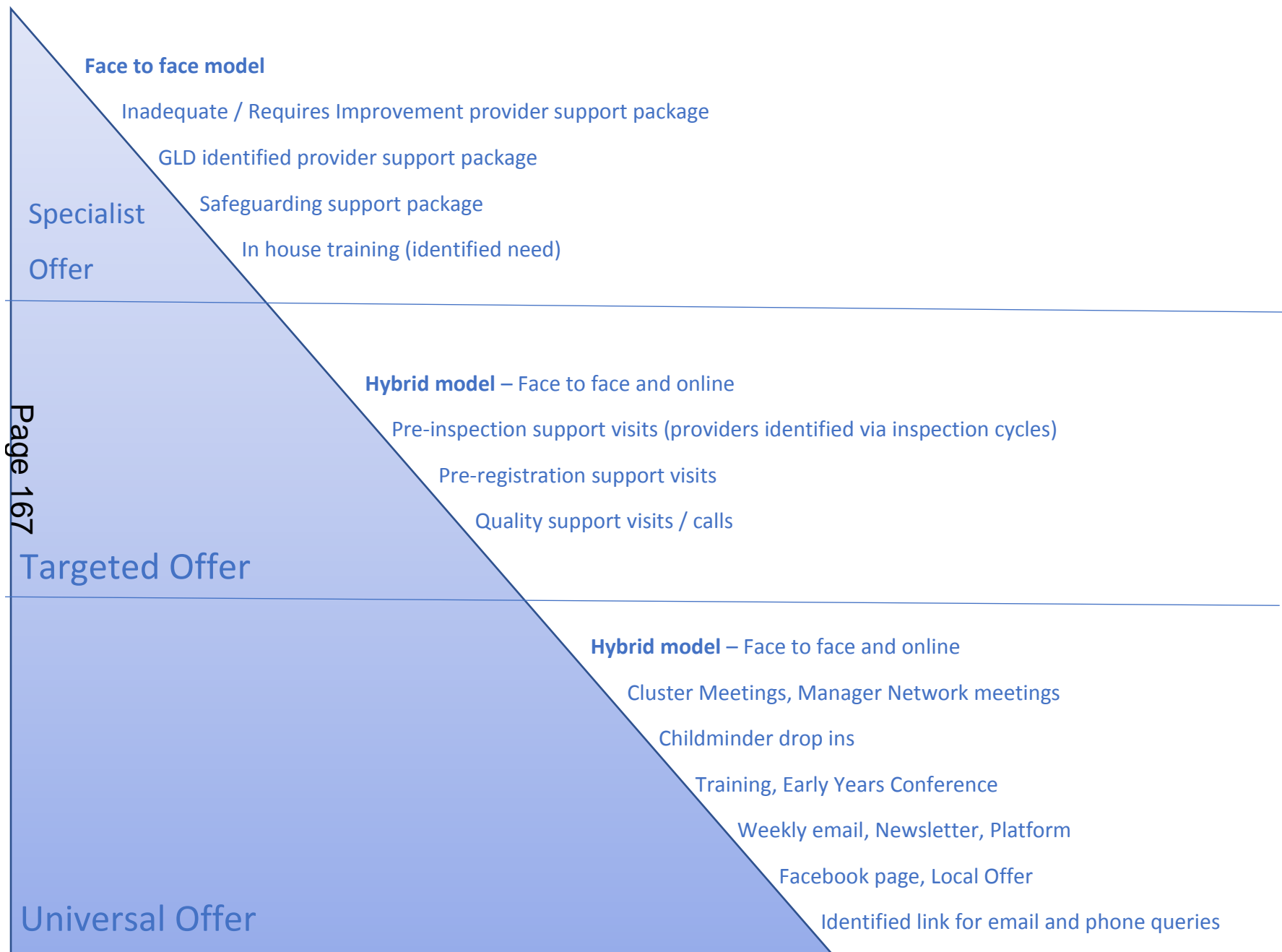
Council Meeting	Date

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Quality Improvement and Training Team offer to early years providers



Signposting to additional and relevant services including:

- SALT
- EY SEND Officers
- Health Visitor Teams/Link HV's
- Ofsted
- Safeguarding Partnership
- IFD
- MEAS
- LADO
- Children's Centres
- ASK Team

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2024/2025
REPORT OF:	CHAIR OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to enable the Children, Young People and Education Committee to review the continuing need for various panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties, and to appoint members and named deputies to serve on those (including the statutory committees and panels) that are to be retained in 2024/2025.

The Council Plan for 2023-2027 sets out the Councils vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan:

- A people focused regeneration.
- Safe, resilient and engaged communities.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- (1) authorise the Monitoring Officer as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Statutory and Advisory Committees listed in the report and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.
- (2) note the current constitution and membership of the School Appeals Panel.
- (3) Give consideration to the proposal to appoint a cross party group of Members to conduct a policy development review in accordance with the approach outlined at appendix 2 of the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Committee is required to appoint the membership of various panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties, which fall under its remit at the start of each Municipal Year.
- 1.2 The key drivers for refreshing policy development work at Committees is the move to a Whole Council Election Scheme in May 2023 and the new four-year Council Plan agreed by Council on 4th December 2023. The Council Plan provides an opportunity to establish a new way of strategically 'working together' across the organisation to deliver the Council Plan vision '*working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities*' and the associated Council Plan enabling and delivery themes:

Enabling Theme:

- Working together to create a more efficient, effective and accessible Council.

Delivery Themes:

- Working together to improve early help for children and families.
- Working together to promote independence and healthier lives.
- Working together to deliver people-focused regeneration.
- Working together to protect our environment.
- Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other options considered include appointing a different number of members to the statutory and advisory bodies.

Policy Development

- 2.2 Potential options which the Committee could investigate, and potential consequences, include:
- 2.2.1 Not conducting policy development work. However, policy development work is clearly stated in The Council's Constitution and not conducting this type of work can be viewed by the sector as being indicative of wider governance and service failure issues (it is also considered good practice). Given the new Council Plan has now been approved, Members now have a clear strategic framework to conduct effective policy development work. It is important as it engenders transparency and enables the Council to be accountable to residents. It can help the Council achieve best value; support further improvement and best practice; and enable locally adopted, enforceable recommendations and policies which deliver better outcomes for the wider community.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Statutory Committees and Panels

3.1 The following statutory committees and panels, all of which have full delegated authority, were retained during 2023/2024.

(i). School Appeals Panel

To consider, as part of a statutory review process, appeals against decisions by the Local Authority (or the Governors of voluntary or aided schools) concerning the allocation of places in primary and secondary schools, and decisions by governing bodies concerning the exclusion of pupils.

The School Appeals Panel is drawn from a “pool” of lay members or members with experience in education. However, Councillors are ineligible to serve on the Appeals Panels for schools under local authority control.

(ii). Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE)

SACRE is responsible for advising the local authority on matters concerning the teaching of religious education and collective acts of worship; it decides on applications for determination of cases in which requirements for Christian collective worship are not to apply; and may require the local authority to review its agreed syllabus. The membership should be politically proportionate, with 6 members being 2 Labour, 2 Conservative, 1 Green and 1 Liberal Democrat.

(iii). Wirral Schools Forum (Funding Consultative Group)

The Forum makes recommendations in respect of the allocation of funding to schools and academies from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) received from the DfE. The Forum must be consulted on any changes to Schools and Early Years funding formulae, arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs and funding to meet statutory duties or other agreed commitments. In the composition of the Forum, the Council’s three representatives act only as observers. The membership should be politically proportionate, with 3 members being 1 Labour, 1 Conservative and 1 Green.

Advisory Committees and Working Parties

3.2 The following is a list of advisory and consultative bodies that were retained or created in 2023/2024 to assist the Committee in its work.

(i). Young People’s Advisory Group

To act as a forum for young people to raise their issues and concerns with local elected members, showcasing youth work delivery across the four constituencies of Wirral.

(ii). Corporate Parenting Panel

Under its Terms of Reference, the Children, Young People and Education Committee is responsible for the appointment of a Sub-Committee and Working Group of five (5) or more members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. The membership should be politically proportionate, with 5 members being 2 Labour, 2 Conservative, 1 Green. Furthermore [two] non-voting co-opted young people with recent (within the last five years) direct experience of being looked after by or receiving services as a care leaver from the Council should be appointed. The Panel has delegated authority to exercise responsibility for the Council's functions relating to the delivery by or on behalf of the Council, of Corporate Parenting functions with the exception to policy decisions which will remain with the Children and Young People's Committee.

(iii). Schools' JCC (formerly Headteachers and Teachers JCC)

To meet with teachers and school representatives to discuss educational issues.

Policy Development Work

Purpose

- 3.3.1 The purpose of policy development work is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures (or those services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants). However, it is not possible to examine every service or activity in detail, so it is important for the Policy and Service Committees to prioritise and plan its work programme for the year to be taken forward through the committee, or a dedicated task and finish group.

Scope

- 3.3.2 The Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section 4) states that the Policy and Services Committees are to adopt policy development working practices when undertaking their functions to review the Council's actions or to review or otherwise scrutinise outside bodies and processes. The Policy and Services Committees may conduct policy development to:
- Review decisions made or actions taken by the Authority in so far as they have a direct impact on the role or functions of the Committee and the Committee can make recommendations to the relevant Committee on policies, budget and service delivery.
 - Undertake reviews and make recommendations on services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants where this does not fall within the role or remit of another service committee or where it relates to cross cutting issues,

including the review and monitoring of contractual and operational performance of shared service partnerships, joint ventures and outside organisations to which the Council makes a resource contribution, focusing on examination of the benefits of the Council's contribution and the extent to which the body concerned makes a contribution to the achievement of the Council's priorities as outlined in the Council Plan 2023 - 2027.

Process

3.3.3 A suggested process for determining and prioritising policy development topics is outlined at Appendix 1. This includes:

- **Identify potential issues –**
 - Consulting with all Members of Policy and Service Committees, Senior Leaders and Council Officers.
 - Looking at Wirral Council Plan priorities, Directorate Business Plans, the Forward Plan of the Council, as well as the MTFs.
 - Considering events and decisions in the Council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets.
 - Reviewing the Council's risk register - analysis of risk registers on an ongoing basis will mean that scrutiny can understand what the impacts might be if risks are likely to occur, and what steps can be taken to mitigate.
 - Evaluating previous Council performance and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work.
 - Carrying out work to engage with local people, for example through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.
 - Reviewing customer complaints to identify any reoccurring themes.
- **Prioritise topics** - Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.
- **Plan policy development and scrutiny work** - Decide which policy topics to review and include them in the work programme.
- **Review and evaluate** - Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added.

3.3.4 For every item on the policy development work programme, it should be clear:

- What is the issue/activity/project under consideration?
- What would the Policy and Service Committee be asked to do?
- What are the reasons for/expected benefits of policy development in this area?
- Strategic considerations (aligned to the new Council Plan and underpinning strategic framework).
- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a requirement under the Council's Constitution to appoint Members to various panels, advisory committees and working parties.
- 5.2 There is a requirement under the Admission Appeals Code 2012 to appoint an Independent Appeal Panel to consider Admission Appeals and Exclusion Reviews.
- 5.3 There is a requirement under the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 for Local Authorities to constitute a Schools Forum.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT; STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is a requirement under the Council's Constitution to appoint Members to various panels, advisory committees and working parties.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

- 8.1 It is for political groups to decide how they wish to allocate their committee places.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Bryn Griffiths**
Senior Democratic Services Officer
telephone: 0151 691 8117
email: bryngriffiths@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

1. Statutory and Advisory Committee membership for the last municipal year, 2023/24.
2. Appendix 2 – Policy Development Timeline and Topic Selection Process

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous reports on the appointment of panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties and amendments made during the year and the Council's Constitution.

Local Government Association Corporate Parenting Resource Park
Admission Appeals Code 2012

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council	22 May 2024
Children, Young People and Education Committee	21 June 2023
Council	24 May 2023
Children, Young People and Education Committee	21 June 2022
Council	25 May 2022
Children, Young People and Education Committee	15 June 2021
Council	26 May 2021

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STATUTORY AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS – MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023/2024

(1) STATUTORY COMMITTEES AND PANELS

(i). School Appeals Panel

Richard Agar, Phil Alcock, John Butler, Hayley Brown, Helen Brennan, David Buckley, Holly Burnett, Clare Calkin, Jenny Chapman-Brown, Penny Croft, Robin Duffield, Diane Darker, Paula Dixon, Barbara Egan, Jessica English, Lyn Eaton, Marion Flanagan, Julie Griffiths, Alison Gollins, Rosaleen Grant, Peter Haworth, Ravi Halebeedu Narayana, Colin Harwood, Jane Hunter, Joanne Henharen, Lynn Ireland, Michael Jones, Robert Jones, Gwendoline Kokborg, Steve Kell, Matthew Lloyd Evans, Val Maher, Isobel McDonald Davies, Peter Mawdsley, Terry McKeown, Keryn Malthouse, Neil Orme, Catherine Oakes, Wendy Pullin, Sally Reynolds, Ruth Rogers, Sue Stratton Symes, Keith Shannon, Phil Sheridan David Spencer, Margaret Smith, Angela Stowell-Smith, Susan Smith, Vicki Shaw, Brenda Taylor, Brenda Thompson, Christine Taylor, Jack Thomas, Robert Thomas, Jenny Turner, Danielle Vernon, Ann Wells, Moira Whelligan-Fell, Barbara Weir, Andrew Welsh, Ruth Winterton, Hilary Welsh, Kathleen Wylde and Jenny Young

(ii). Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE)

Councillors	Helen Collinson Daisy Kenny	Deputy –
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Councillors	Cherry Povall Alison Wright	Deputy – Councillor Kathy Hodson
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Councillor	Chris Cooke	Deputy -
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Councillor	Chris Carubia	Deputy –
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(iii). Wirral Schools Forum (Funding Consultative Group)

Observers

Councillor	Helen Collinson
Councillor	Vida Wilson
Councillor	Chris Cooke

(2) ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

(i). Young People's Advisory Group

Councillors	Helen Collinson Sue Powell-Wilde Daisy Kenny
-------------	--

Councillors Alison Wright
Vida Wilson

Councillors Emily Gleaves
Chris Cooke

(ii). Corporate Parenting Panel

Councillors Helen Collinson
Sue Powell-Wilde

Councillors Alison Wright
Kathy Hodson

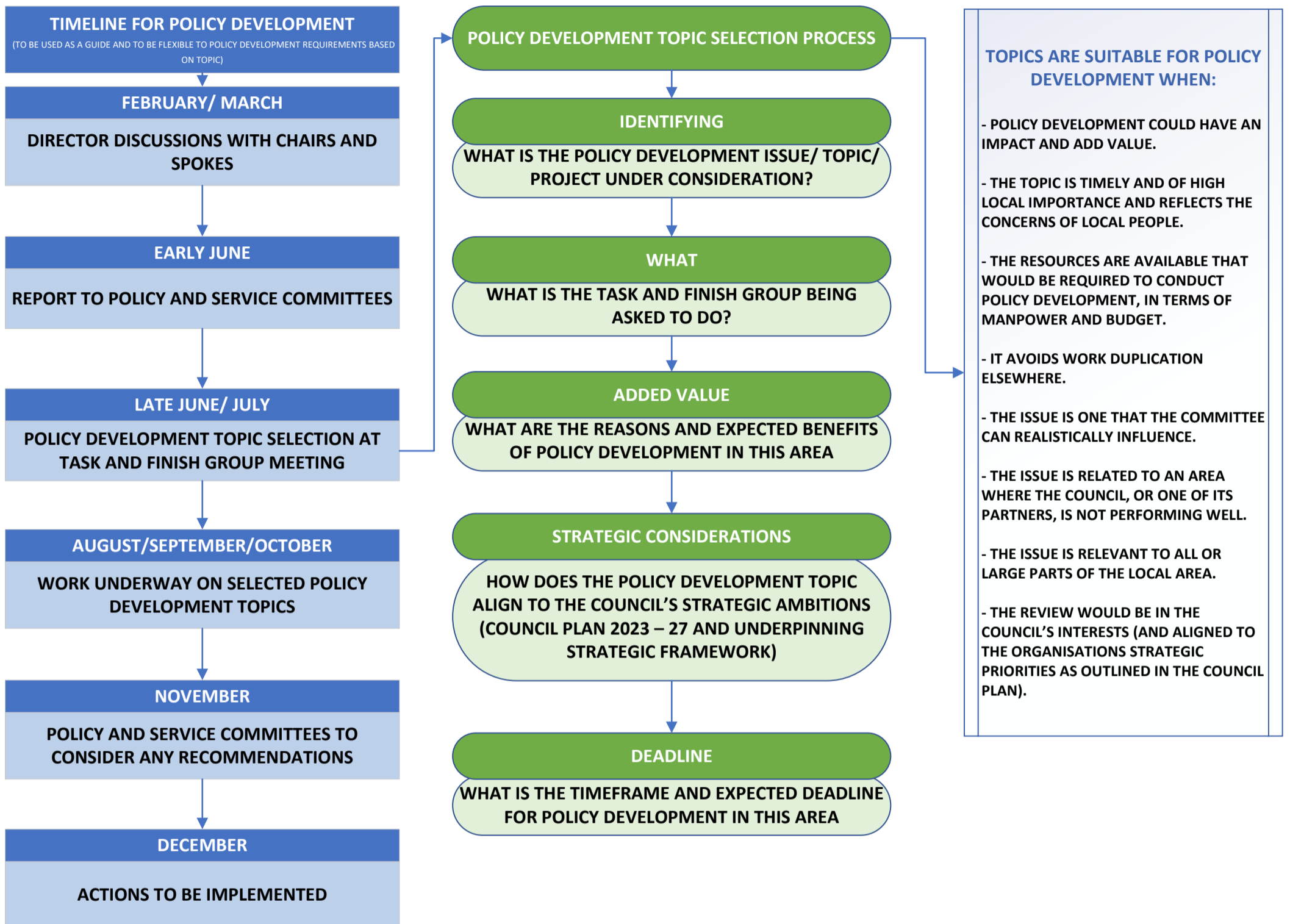
Councillor Chris Cooke

(iii). Schools' Joint Consultative Committee

Councillors TBC

Councillors Kathy Hodson
Cherry Povall

POLICY DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE AND TOPIC SELECTION PROCESS



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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 23 JULY 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Children, Young People and Education Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

It is envisaged that the work programme will be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Children, Young People and Education Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to note and comment on the proposed Children, Young People and Education Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of workplan formats were explored, with the current framework open to amendment to match the requirements of the Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The work programme should align with the priorities of the Council and its partners. The programme will be informed by:

- The Council Plan
- The Council's transformation programme
- The Council's Forward Plan
- Service performance information
- Risk management information
- Public or service user feedback
- Referrals from Council

Terms of Reference

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is responsible for services which help keep children and young people safe and fulfil their potential. It incorporates schools and attainment, and social care for children and families. It has a particular focus on those children who are in care, and for whom the Council has corporate parenting responsibility. The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for: -

- (a) exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council;
- (b) the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education;
- (c) working with all schools (including academies) in relation to raising standards of attainment and developing opportunities;
- (d) leading for the Council and its partners in the discharge the Council's functions as Corporate Parent for its children in care and care leavers;
- (e) any other functions comprised in partnership arrangements with other bodies connected with the delivery of services for children, young people and families;

- (f) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions;
- (g) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:
 - child protection;
 - children's centres;
 - education, schools and settings;
 - looked after children;
 - mental health services;
 - safeguarding;
 - special educational needs and disability (SEND);
 - youth offending services;
 - youth services; and
 - social and education transport

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications to Staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake its responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct community wealth implications.

REPORT AUTHOR: Bryn Griffiths
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Phone: 0151 691 8117
email: bryngriffiths@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Children, Young People and Education Committee Work Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Constitution
Forward Plan
The Council's transformation programme

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People and Education Committee	1 December 2020
	28 January 2021
	11 March 2021
	15 June 2021
	4 October 2021
	27 October 2021
	23 November 2021
	31 January 2022
	10 March 2022
	21 June 2022
	19 July 2022
	19 September 2022

	12 October 2022 6 December 2022 24 January 2023 7 March 2023 21 June 2023 19 July 2023 25 September 2023 18 October 2023 29 November 2023 1 February 2024 6 March 2024
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**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

KEY DECISIONS JULY 2024

Item	Brief Description	Committee Meeting	Lead Departmental Officer
Pupils Excluded from Education Key Stage 4		July 2024	Chris Lowcock / Becky Heskey
Youth Justice Service		September/October	Kathy Gill

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

Item	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Cheshire & Merseyside Learning Disability and Autism Housing Strategy	July 2024	Jayne Marshall
Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Deep Dive	June 2024	Kerry Mehta
2023/24 Budget Monitoring Q4 Financial Outturn	July 2024	Asako Brown
2024/25 Budget and Budget Monitoring Processes	July 2024	Asako Brown
2024/25 Budget Monitoring for Q1 (the period to 30 June 2024)	July 2024	Asako Brown
Children's Services Performance Report Quarter 4	July 2024	Tricia Thomas
Appointment of Panels, Statutory / Advisory Committees and Working Parties 2024 / 2025	July 2024	Bryn Griffiths
Early Years Quality Assurance and Sufficiency	July 2024	James Backhouse / Sarah Harper
Attendance Report & Electively Home Educated Children	September 2024	Catherine Kerr
Virtual School	September 2024	Trish Lewis

Budget	September 2024	Asako Brown
Corporate Parenting Panel, Corporate Parenting report	September 2024	S Smith
Annual Review of Ofsted Inspections in Wirral Schools	September 2024	James Backhouse
Care Programme Report	September 2024	Kerry Mehta
Home to School Travel Programme	September 2024	James Backhouse
Safeguarding, Fostering & Adoption	October 2024	Kerry Mehta
Wrap Around Provision	October 2024	Sarah Harper
Youth Justice Annual Plan	October 2024	Mark Evans
Safer Adolescence Strategy (Including Youth Offer & P&E Approaches)	October 2024	Kathy Gill & Mark Newman
Lifelong Learning Annual Report	October 2024	P Smith

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Performance and Financial Monitoring Report	Quarterly June September December March	Tricia Thomas
Budget Update	Quarterly June September November February/March	Asako Brown
Annual Review of Ofsted inspections in Wirral Schools	Every June	James Backhouse
Reappointment of School Appeals Panel Members	Every June	
Children's Committee Work Programme Update	Each Meeting	Committee Team
Summary of Standards KS4 Outcomes	January	James Backhouse
Safeguarding Partnership	Every January	David Robbins

Annual Report		
Safeguarding Fostering and Adoption	Every October	Kerry Mehta
Lifelong Learning Annual Performance report	Every September	Paul Smith
Admission Arrangements	Every January	Sally Gibbs

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Corporate Parenting Panel	Committee	Ongoing	Steve Smith	
Workshop – Statutory Duties (School Budget)	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
Delivering Better Value - SEND	Workshop	February 2024	Elizabeth Hartley / James Backhouse	
Child Poverty Strategy	Workshop	21 March 2024	Elizabeth Hartley/Anna Paxman	
School Budget Update – inc traded services & Designated School’s Grant	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
Budget Monitoring Panel	Monthly meeting	TBC	Asako Brown	
Rising EHCP Needs and Increased Costs (Action)	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
Task and Finish Reviews				
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Spotlight Sessions and Workshops				
All Age Disability Service	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	

Children, Young People and Education Committee – Terms of Reference

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is responsible for services which help keep children and young people safe and fulfil their potential. It incorporates schools and attainment, and social care for children and families. It has a particular focus on those children who are in care, and for whom the Council has corporate parenting responsibility.

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- (c) working with all schools (including academies) in relation to raising standards of attainment and developing opportunities;
- (d) leading for the Council and its partners in the discharge the Council's functions as Corporate Parent for its children in care and care leavers;
- (e) any other functions comprised in partnership arrangements with other bodies connected with the delivery of services for children, young people and families;
- (f) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions;
- (g) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:
 - child protection;
 - children's centres;
 - education, schools and settings;
 - looked after children;
 - mental health services;
 - safeguarding;
 - special educational needs and disability (SEND);
 - youth offending services;
 - youth services; and
 - social and education transport

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