

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 7 November 2012

Present:

Councillor W Clements (Chair)

Councillors J Crabtree W Smith
D Dodd P Williams
P Doughty
P Hayes
B Mooney
C Povall

Co-opted:

Mrs J Owens
Mr A Scott
Mrs N Smith

34 **COUNCILLOR ANNE MCARDLE**

The Committee stood in memory of Councillor Anne McArdle who had sadly passed away on 2 November, 2012.

35 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP**

Members of the Committee were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non pecuniary interests, in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillor Wendy Clements declared a non pecuniary interest by virtue of her employment.

36 **CONSIDERATION OF FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which was to be presented to Cabinet on 8 November, 2012 with the results of the first stage of the consultation process. The consultation results contained within the report were intended to provide a good understanding of residents, partners and employees views on the Council's future priorities and appropriate methods in which savings should be delivered. All of the comments provided through the consultation had been analysed and summarised within the report, and all comments would be published on the Council website during November 2012.

Subject to Cabinet approval, the report would be followed by a second stage of consultation which would begin in November 2012. This second stage would involve consultation with residents, employees and other stakeholders to gather views on a range of detailed options for achieving the necessary budget savings for 2013/14.

The Committee received a presentation from Jane Morgan, Corporate Policy Manager, Chief Executive's Department, on the process and findings of the consultation. She responded to questions from Members who expressed their thanks to staff for the work that had gone into the consultation.

The consultation had involved a programme of over 150 events, and speaking to over 13,000 residents. Over 37,500 paper questionnaires had been distributed, and 6921 responses were received – giving a return rate of around 18%. This was a higher response to any previous Wirral Council consultation and, according to published data, higher than any comparable exercise anywhere in the UK.

The summarised results analysis contained within the report demonstrated support for each of the principles contained within the consultation including Increasing Income, Alternative Delivery, Shaping Community Services and Stopping or reducing, with a number of caveats to be considered as detailed budget options were developed.

On a motion by Councillor Wendy Clements seconded by Councillor Paul Hayes it was;

Resolved (9:0) – That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanks the many Wirral residents who have responded to this consultation and notes that the questionnaire results place “Protecting our vulnerable adults and children” as the top priority. This Committee also holds protecting vulnerable children as a priority.

The Committee commends to the Cabinet the observations that:

- **Some of our most vulnerable children are those who are Looked After. Committee values and supports the work to provide them with the very best care and future. This work is vital and must be resourced sufficiently to keep children safe and well cared for.**
- **The support given to Wirral Schools by Children and Young People Department is widely valued and appreciated in helping to create the best possible education for Wirral children.**
- **Section 7.2 of the report identifies reducing crime and antisocial behaviour as a further high priority. Committee values the work done by the various aspects of the Integrated Youth Service and the work each accomplishes in tackling or preventing anti-social behaviour.**
- **Committee believes that provision of a large number of facilities for young people (7.3) has a role to play in preventing anti-social behaviour, as does provision of leisure centres and libraries. These not only provide opportunities for activities that fulfil the Every Child Matters agenda (Be Healthy, Enjoy and Achieve) but are also of benefit to a large**

portion of the population of all ages. Children who from all backgrounds, but particularly those who live in poverty can benefit from free access to books and to internet facilities.

- Committee endorses the recommendation at 18.2 of the report that communities should not become isolated through changes to services or closing of Council facilities and notes that Council buildings offering services, such as Children's Centres and libraries have potential to help in this aspiration.