



Children Sub-Committee

Date:	Thursday, 22 September 2016
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 2 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Sub-Committee is invited to appoint a Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Sub-Committee is invited to appoint a Vice-Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

The accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2016 were approved at the Council meeting held on 7 July 2016. The minutes are attached for information only.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 7 - 8)

The terms of reference of the Children Sub-Committee are attached for information.

6. WIRRAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES OFSTED REPORT

Presentation.

Report to follow.

7. SCHOOL STANDARDS REPORT - ATTAINMENT FOR 2016 AT KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

Presentation.

8. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (Pages 9 - 14)

9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 30 March 2016

Present Councillors A Brighouse P Hayes
W Clements M McLaughlin
A Davies W Smith
Harrison

In attendance: M Harrison, Parent
Governor Rep

Apologies Councillors T Norbury

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the Children's Sub Committee held 16 December 2015 were considered by Members.

Resolved – That the minutes be approved

18 MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members of the Sub – Committee were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any relevant interest in connection with any items on the agenda and if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made

19 CHILDREN'S CENTRES - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Head of Targeted Services addressed the Sub-Committee and informed Members of progress against Performance Indicators in respect of Children's Centres in Wirral.

Members heard how progress had been hindered by the delayed implementation of the Family Intervention Service. They were then informed how a re-organisation of the Family Support and intensive Family Intervention Programme teams into a single service area through formal consultation with staff, HR and Trade Unions had delayed the launch of the new programme by approximately 3 months. Members were advised that Children's Centre Staff were no longer at risk of redundancy.

Performance Indicators were identified to Members as follows:

- **The take up of 2 year old offer by eligible families** - This had not been utilised as effectively as it could be. In response, it was explained that the process for contacting eligible families has been revised which would enable increased take up of the offer with more targeted outreach to those families that had not accessed funding.
- **Increased take-up of Children's Centre services for Children Looked After, Children in Need and Children subject to a Child Protection Plan** – There has been an increased take up in this area, however, there is still work to be undertaken with Foster Carers.
- **Family intervention service engagement with families-** The start of the formal consultation and review of Family Intervention was delayed for several months. This means that Family Intervention Teams will not be established until September 2015.
- **Family Intervention Service positive outcomes with families** – Due to the nature of the Payment by Results terms the majority of outcomes cannot be claimed until 12 months post identification.
- **% of families with an under 5 living in the most 0-20% most deprived SOA's that are registered with a Children's Centre** - Work is being undertaken by Registrars to ensure that parents are registering children at a local Children's Centre.
- **% of families with an under 5 living in the 0 – 20% most deprived SOA's who have sustained contact with a Children's Centre** – The level of sustained contact has dropped slightly across the quarter (28% in April) due to data cleansing exercise.

In addition to Performance Indicators a detailed action plan was provided to members, in conjunction with the Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision and was summarised as follows:

Priority one: Children in Wirral will start life well

Theme Lead: Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group

Action points are to:

- 1) Increase the uptake of maternity services delivered by integrated teams in locality – based settings;
- 2) Improve young children's health outcomes: raise breastfeeding rates so performance is equally good across the borough; targeted reduction in obesity at age 4 – 5.

Priority two: Children receive sensitive and responsive care from their main caregivers in the first years of life

Theme Lead: Wirral Council – Early Childhood Delivery Group

- 3) Provide training and mentoring for child-minders, nurseries and childcare settings which focuses on the attachment needs of babies and infants.
- 4) Review both evidence – based parenting programmes and peer-led and community based activities to ensure all parents can access support for effective parenting.

Priority Three: Increase of the % of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage.

Theme Lead: Wirral Council – Early Childhood Delivery Group

- 5) Close the gap in readiness for school for disadvantaged children.
- 6) Percentage of schools and childcare settings rated good or outstanding increases.
- 7) Improve the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old nursery places for vulnerable children by sharing responsibility as a partnership.

During a discussion regarding Childcare provision, Councillor W Clements declared a personal interest by virtue of her being employed in an Early Setting.

A Member expressed concern regarding a lack of a statistical evidence having been provided to Members in advance of the meeting and requested that in the future such reports are included with the main agenda

Resolved – That Members note the contents of the presentation.

20 **SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS**

A report by the Group Manager for Adoption and Fostering provided Members with an update on the progress being made in implementing recommendation 9 of the Scrutiny Review of Safeguarding Children in Wirral, December 2015. Members heard how the two main areas that the Scrutiny Report Recommendations being addressed in relation to Special Guardianship were:

- i) Assessment of potential Special Guardians in line with regulations and procedures; and
- ii) ii) Post Special Guardianship support offered throughout childhood.

It was explained that the assessment criteria for assessing a Special Guardian differs from a Fostering Assessment in that a Special Guardianship Assessment is based on the specific, individual needs and circumstances of the particular child/ children. Members were then informed how it is essential, when assessing a potential carer as a Special Guardian, that they can

evidence their ability to evaluate potential risks in the future in order to protect the child/children.

Members were informed that new regulations had been published in line with the Special Guardianship (amendment) regulations 2016 setting out the requirement for a stronger evidence base for the assessment. Members then heard how, in light of the new regulations and supporting court reports, Children's Services are updating procedures for Special Guardianship and associated practice guidance for Social Workers, which is due to be completed by April 2016.

Members were advised that in order to support the transition towards Special Guardianship for a child/children, Children's Services may recommend to the Court that a Supervision Order is issued in addition to the Special Guardianship Order, to strengthen the authority's responsibilities and duties to support the placement.

Members heard how the Group Manager for Adoption and Fostering had met with a group of Grandparents who were also Special Guardians to discuss support. In addition, focus groups would be held during May 2016 with Special Guardians to consider the breadth of their support needs, so that they are well supported to enable children to reach their full potential.

In response to a question from a Member it was explained that a potential Special Guardian could be assessed as suitable to care for a child, even if they had not met the threshold to be considered as a suitable foster carer. Members expressed concern regarding this and it was explained that when a case comes to Permanence Panel, the focus is to get the best order for the child and this is assessed very carefully around associated risks.

It was then explained, following a question raised, that at present the only access Social Services have to Special Guardian's, is if concerns are raised.

The Director of Children's Services informed Members that an exercise would be conducted to benchmark local framework against other authorities.

Resolved – That Members note the contents of the report.

21 **FEEDBACK FROM RECENT OFSTED INSPECTIONS - OVERVIEW**

The Strategic Service Manager, Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch reported upon the feedback from recent Ofsted inspections.

Members heard how the current position from September 2016 up to 21 March 2016 is as follows:

- 0 Schools are in an Ofsted category
- 7 secondary schools require improvement (3 academies, 4 maintained)
- 13 primary schools requiring improvement
- 87% of primary schools are currently good or better
- 67% of secondary schools are currently good or better
- 100% of special schools are good or better

Members were then advised that there had been 10 inspections from 1 September 2015 to 21 March 2016. Outcomes from these inspections have been: 0 schools had been downgraded 6 schools had stayed the same and 4 schools had been upgraded.

Members were informed that a meeting would be held with the Regional School's Coordinator to discuss school improvement. A meeting would also be held with a Civil Servant from the Department for Education.

The Strategic Service Manager, Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch emphasised to Members that the main focus is upon the young people of Wirral, despite any challenges that the Authority may face in coming years.

The Director for Children's Services explained to Members that Wirral had been involved in a peer challenge alongside other Local Authorities and that a positive challenge had been identified

The Chair commented that the outcomes had proved to be positive

In response to a question by a Member, it was explained that relationships between the Local Authority and Academies remain to be good

Resolved – That the contents of the presentation be noted

22 **WORK PROGRAMME**

A report by the Scrutiny Support Officer updated Members on progress towards delivering the work programme for the Children Sub Committee as agreed for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

The Chair requested that a follow up report regarding Special Guardianship be brought back to a future meeting of the Children's Sub Committee.

Resolved – That Members note the contents of the work programme for the Children's Sub Committee for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

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PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Children Sub-Committee is to support the Council and its partners in delivering Wirral's Strategy for children, young people and families to ensure:

- Children are ready for school;
- Young people are ready for work and adulthood
- Vulnerable children thrive and reach their full potential
- Children and young people feel safe and are safe
- Children and young people's views and voices are evidenced in and integral to all of the above objectives.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Children Sub-Committee will provide oversight, support and challenge to the activities of Wirral Council and its partners in relation to the following areas:

- Children's attainment in school, focusing in particular on the attainment of the most vulnerable children, evidenced by the gap in attainment narrowing;
- The quality and performance of educational provision overall in Wirral, as judged by Ofsted;
- The quality and effectiveness of pre-birth to five year old support and provision for children and parents, leading to children having the best start in life, evidenced by their readiness for school;
- The quality and effectiveness of specialist children social care and partner provision to support the most vulnerable children, leading to children being safe and achieving their full potential;
- Targeted early help effectively supports more children to thrive and live safely in their families and communities
- Monitoring Local Authority performance against its statutory duties

PROPOSED WORKING PRACTICES OF THE CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE

Sub Committee meetings	
Chair	The Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed at the first meeting of the Sub-Committee in the municipal year
Membership	The membership of the Sub-Committee will be politically proportional. (On the current political balance, this translates into 4 Labour; 2 Conservative; 1 Liberal Democrat). In addition, the 4 statutory education co-optees will be members of the Sub-Committee.
Deputies	A maximum of 8 Elected Members per political group may be nominated to sit on the Sub-Committee as Deputies. The appointment of Deputies shall take effect upon the Group Leaders of each political group notifying the Head of Legal & Member Services of their deputy nominations.
Frequency	To meet a minimum of three times per year.
Work programme	The Sub-Committee will identify a work programme for the year, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task & Finish Groups • Standing Items • Specific Officer reports / presentations
Reporting Requirements	The minutes of the Sub-Committee meetings will be reported to the next available People Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
Communication & Transparency	Meetings will be held in public with agendas being published prior to the meeting and formal minutes being produced. Therefore, support from Committee services will be required



Children Sub Committee Thursday, 22nd September 2016

REPORT TITLE:	Children Sub Committee – work programme update
REPORT OF:	The Chair of the Committee

REPORT SUMMARY

This report explains the process of developing and managing the scrutiny work programme for the municipal year. At the meeting of the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC), held on 14th July 2016, the Children Sub Committee was re-established for the 2016/17 municipal year. The Sub Committee needs to define an annual work programme, which should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the Wirral Plan pledges which are within the remit of the Committee. Clearly the work programme of the Sub Committee should supplement, not duplicate, the work programme of the parent committee, the People OSC.

This report describes the process to enable members to deliver and manage the work programme for the municipal year. This process provides the committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The initial list of potential topics includes a number of items highlighted during the previous municipal year. This list can be supplemented by other items which members may want to propose.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1. Members are requested to approve the proposed Children Sub Committee work programme for 2016/17, making any required amendments, including suggestions for additional items.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

To ensure members of the Children Sub Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not Applicable

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 DEVELOPING A SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

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

To maximise impact, scrutiny should ensure that topics of significance are prioritised in the work programme. The Wirral Plan pledges and associated strategies of particular relevance to the Children Sub Committee are:

Pledge	Strategies
Children are ready for school	Wirral's Strategy for children, young people and families https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/About%20the%20council/Wirral%20Plan/Children%20Young%20People%20and%20Families%20Strategy.pdf
Young people are ready for work and adulthood	
Vulnerable children reach their full potential	

Members are requested to propose items for inclusion on the work programme for the municipal year. In order to assist this process, the following paragraphs show a list of items which formed part of the work programme for the previous municipal year but still remain relevant followed by a list of relevant items which are already included on the work programme of the parent committee.

3.2 RELEVANT ITEMS FROM THE CHILDREN SUB COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE PREVIOUS MUNICIPAL YEAR

The following items formed part of the work programme of the Children Sub Committee for the previous municipal year. Members may want to continue to include some of these items for the new year:

Item	Format	Context
School Standards report: Outcomes for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	Report	This report is provided on an annual basis and will be available at the September 2016 meeting.
School Standards report: Attainment at GCSE and A Level	Report	This report is provided on an annual basis.
Exception reports highlighting positive and negative aspects arising from school Ofsted inspection reports	Report	Historically, a summary of school Ofsted reports have been reported to the Children Sub-Committee (or previous committee).
School strategies to narrow the attainment gap	Member visits	It had been proposed that visits to a variety of schools would give members an overview of the strategies employed to narrow the attainment gap. (Subject to available capacity).
Devolution of the Further education budget and the apprenticeship framework	Report	Raised at the December 2015 meeting, it was proposed that this item be referred for inclusion in the 2016/17 work programme. (Subject to available capacity).
Children Social Care reorganisation – follow-up (arising from the Safeguarding scrutiny report)	Workshop / task & finish group	The Safeguarding Children Scrutiny report was completed in December 2015. Recommendation 16 of that report stated: “Recommendation 16 – Social Care re-organisation: Follow-up investigation by members The Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources is requested to enable scrutiny members to arrange a follow-up session / workshop to evaluate the effectiveness of the re-organisation once the new Specialist services social care teams are embedded. The review, which will include front-line staff and possibly parents and families, will also monitor the success of the plans to achieve improved retention of staff”.
Complaints report for Children’s Services	Report	This report is provided on an annual basis and is scheduled for the December 2016 meeting.
Special Guardianship Orders	Report	Further to a recommendation made in the Safeguarding Children Scrutiny Report, the Sub-Committee received a report on Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in March 2016. The Director informed the meeting that further work would take place regarding the use of SGOs and a further report would be provided to the Sub Committee.

3.3 RELEVANT ITEMS FROM THE PEOPLE OSC WORK PROGRAMME

The People OSC (8th September 2016) has agreed that the following items should form part of the work programme of the main committee:

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Looked after children - Follow-up review	Evidence Day(s)	Sept / Oct 2016	Liz Davenport
Children ready for school	Task & finish group	To be agreed	Deborah Gornik
Children Safeguarding Annual Report	Committee Report	28 Nov 2016	Simon Garner / Bernard Walker

3.4 OUTCOMES OF THE OFSTED REPORT FOR WIRRAL COUNCIL CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Ofsted inspection of Wirral's Children's Services was undertaken in July / August 2016. The report is due to be published shortly and is likely to provide a useful source of potential topics. The Ofsted report will be presented as a separate item on this agenda. Once published, members may want to add some of those topics to their work programme.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

The delivery of the scrutiny work programme will be met from within existing resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Not Applicable

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Not Applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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