



Council

Extraordinary Meeting

(Ofsted Inspection Report)

Town Hall
Wallasey

7 October 2016

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held at **4.00 pm on Monday, 17 October 2016** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects : -

Contact Officer: Patrick Sebastian
Tel: 0151 691 8424
e-mail: patricksebastian@wirral.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

3. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT

A. Requisition Notice (Labour Group) (Pages 1 – 2)

B. Requisition Notice (Conservative Group) (Pages 3 – 6)

C. Notice of Motion (Labour Group) (Pages 7 – 8)

D. Notice of Motion (Conservative Group) (Pages 9 – 10)

E. Notice of Motion (Liberal Democrat Group) (Pages 11 – 12)

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a horizontal line at the bottom.

Head of Legal and Member Services

Agenda Item 3a

From: Turner, Barbara
Sent: 19 September 2016 17:02
To: McLachlan, Ann RC. (Councillor)
Subject: REQUEST

Dear Deputy Mayor McLachlan,

In light of the recent OFSTED report, we the undersigned, are requesting an Extraordinary Council meeting at the next available opportunity.

We have been reassured to hear the Chief Executive has already taken rapid action to begin to understand the challenges and put in place an improvement board and action plan. We also welcome the decision of the Leader of The Council to immediately commit a further £2million to enact any changes or improvements the board recommends.

The safety of the vulnerable in our community, especially youngsters under the protection of the Council and its partners, has always been a priority for this authority. When the 2020 pledges to protect the vulnerable were universally approved by Council and The Wirral Partnership, it was a positive sign of how all members, officers and wider public sector groups were committed to improving outcomes for residents, irrespective of politics or organisation bias.

This is a further opportunity for everyone who genuinely cares about improving the services and care provided to our vulnerable youngsters to contribute their ideas and voice their support for the Improvement Plan being put in place.

Yours sincerely



Bill Davies

Councillor Bernie Mooney
Councillor Christine Jones
Councillor George Davies
Councillor Janette Williamson
Councillor Stuart Whittingham
Councillor Bill Davies

Wirral Council
Town Hall
Brighton Street
Wallasey
Wirral CH44 8ED

0151 691 8652

By Email

23rd September 2016

Dear Mr Mayor

REQUEST TO REQUISITION AN EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Please find below signatures from 21 Members of the Council requisitioning an extraordinary meeting of the Council to discuss the recent Ofsted report:

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

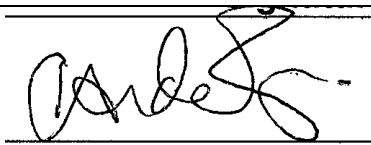
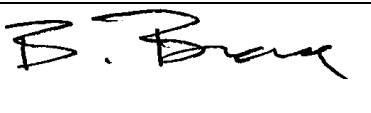
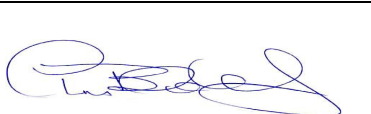
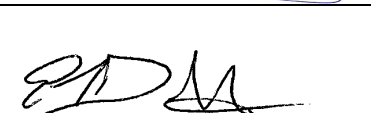
And


Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Where children's services in Wirral were rated as inadequate.

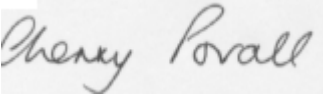




We are gravely concerned that the current Labour Administration have abdicated all responsibility for these failings and we have absolutely no confidence that the Leader of the Council and his Cabinet, who have allowed the services to deteriorate to such an unacceptable level, are the right people to provide the leadership required to improve Wirral Council's Children's Services to the level our residents expect and children deserve.

Yours sincerely

Tom Anderson	
Bruce Berry	
Chris Blakeley	
Eddie Boulton	

David Burgess-Joyce	
Wendy Clements	Wendy Clements
David Elderton	David M Elderton
Gerry Ellis	Gerry Ellis
Jeff Green	J Green
John Hale	John Hale

Paul Hayes	Paul Hayes
Andrew Hodson	A Hodson
Kathy Hodson	K Hodson
Ian Lewis	Ian Lewis
Tracey Pilgrim	T.A. Pilgrim

Cherry Povall	
Lesley Rennie	
Adam Sykes	
Geoffrey Watt	
Steve Williams	

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EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 17THOCTOBER 2016

OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT

1. Council accepts OFSTED's report on services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and the 19 recommendations for improvement and agrees that there needs to be radical change across the service, the council and partnership. The details will be proposed to an Improvement Board comprising key stakeholders including an independent chair, an advisor appointed by the Department for Education and members from the main political groups on the Council.
2. Council acknowledges the difficult circumstances Wirral's children's services operate under - the growing demand for care from struggling families, the complexity of the cases being managed, and the cruel impact Government policy and funding decisions continue to have on families and residents in Wirral.
3. Keeping our children safe is our highest priority and there is no excuse for failing to deliver the highest quality services to vulnerable young people in Wirral. The key priority now is to develop an effective improvement plan with detailed actions and outcomes which address all of OFSTED's recommendations.
4. Council notes, as the OFSTED report acknowledged, many of the changes suggested have already started, but they need to deliver not just improvement but outstanding services for vulnerable children.
5. Council welcomes the quick and clear response of the Labour administration in organising an improvement board with representation from across the political groups, members of the Wirral Partnership, independent advisors, and the engagement of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to demonstrate the priority this issue has for the whole authority.
6. Council also welcomes the allocation of £2m to enable immediate changes in children's services to happen at pace, including recruitment of a new Head of Service and other key posts, improvements in training, improved accountability and, ultimately, improved performance and outcomes for young people.
7. Council supports the social workers, officers, voluntary sector, foster families, carers and partners who are committed to improving the services our vulnerable young people receive and to the action plans and programmes of improvement that are already underway.
8. Council agrees to receive progress reports on the improvement plan relating to OFSTED's recommendations as well as appropriate reports being submitted to Cabinet, scrutiny committees and other relevant bodies.

Proposed: Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded: Councillor Tony Smith

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Meeting:	Extraordinary Council – Ofsted Report into Children’s Services
Date:	Monday 17 th October 2016
Proposed by:	Cllr. Jeff Green
Seconded by:	Cllr. Wendy Clements

Notice of Motion:

Council is appalled at the findings contained within the inspection report into Children’s Services in Wirral from Ofsted, the opening line of which reads: “there are widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children who need help and protection in Wirral.” The independent report lays bare in the starkest possible terms the catastrophic failure of the Labour Administration to provide any sort of leadership to the service and their inability to perform the most important duty they have – to keep the Borough’s children safe.

Council notes that under the previous Conservative / Liberal Democrat Administration, safeguarding and looked after children’s services were rated good by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

Council is angered that the Labour Administration was warned multiple times that its plan of scrutinising itself by appointing Labour Chairmanships of Scrutiny Committees was doomed to failure. Not only did the Administration ignore opposition members they also did not implement the recommendation from the LGA Peer review in 2015 which stated “the role of scrutiny may be enhanced in the longer term by offering opposition members a leadership role on the Policy & Performance Committees.”

Council is disappointed that so far a culture of spin and news management has pervaded the Labour ranks:

- leaked letters
- a long line of Council ‘spokesmen’ rolled out to face the public anger whilst the Labour Administration hide in their bunker
- a special council requisitioned before the Ofsted report was made public
- complete silence from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Council is gravely concerned that the current Labour Administration have abdicated all responsibility for these failings and we have absolutely no confidence that the Leader of the Council and his Cabinet, who have allowed the services to deteriorate to such an unacceptable level, are the right people to provide the leadership required to improve Wirral Council’s Children’s Services to the level our residents expect and children deserve.

Council therefore requests:

- a. A root and branch review of current governance arrangements for overview and scrutiny to enhance its independence from the Administration.
- b. The resignation of the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Children and

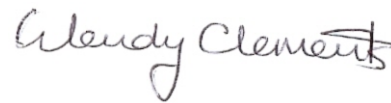
Family Services, the Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Pledge Champion for 'Vulnerable children reach their full potential'.

c. That the Strategic Director, Families and Wellbeing and other Senior Officers responsible, consider their positions and honestly assess whether they are the right people to lead and oversee the desperate requirement to improve this service.

d. Quarterly Special Council meetings to review the progress of the action plan developed under the stewardship of the Department for Education.

Proposer:

Seconder:



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - NOTICE OF MOTION (1)

<i>for Council on</i>	17 October 2016 (Extraordinary Meeting at 4pm)
<i>submitted on</i>	6 October 2016
<i>to:</i>	Surjit Tour
<i>copied to:</i>	Andrew Mossop, Patrick Sebastian
<i>Proposed by:</i>	Cllr Phil Gilchrist
<i>Seconded by:</i>	Cllr Alan Brighthouse

OFSTED'S LEGITIMATE CONCERNS

In the light of the Inspection findings, this Council will do its utmost to ensure that the 19 recommendations relating to its role are fully implemented in a timely and purposeful manner.

Council will progress the recommendations relating to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. It must have the capacity, input from partners, funding, accurate data, reporting arrangements and independence to carry out its work.

Council welcomes the clear process being followed as set out in the OFSTED Handbook 'Monitoring and re-inspection of local authority children's services judged inadequate' (published in August 2016). The Council must pay full regard to this statutory process and heed the advice and oversight of the DfE's independent advisor.

Since Members of the Children Sub Committee received a presentation on the issues on 22 September, a number of Members are properly apprised of the issues in hand. However, Council is concerned that the 'Spotlight Session' originally arranged for 11 October 2016 was postponed. The key failings could have been outlined in a similar frank manner prior to Council to provide a more informed debate from the start of the improvement journey.

Council, however, needs to reflect upon the adequacy of its oversight regarding the changes in management, structures and organisation that took place between the inspection of 2011 and the recent inspection. Cases across the country have brought about increased pressures on front line staff. A firmer OFSTED process was anticipated. This alone cannot explain the difference between the assessments.

Council needs to be reminded what OFSTED found in 2011 ...

'overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is good'

'The capacity for improvement is good'

'Succession planning in children's services to support continual improvement is very good'.

'The quality of leadership provided by the interim director is excellent, and the internal appointment has ensured a seamless transition'

' Managerial oversight of these cases is consistently well evidenced and ensures that effective and timely intervention is taking place'

'There is an outstanding level of commitment to improving services for children and young people in Wirral shared by the leader, Lead Member, Interim Chief Executive and the interim Director of Children's Services'

'Senior managers in children's social care offer outstanding support and share a clear vision with front line managers who in turn consider they are professionally valued and well engaged'



Members must, therefore, question whether the chopping and changing of scrutiny arrangements, limiting the choice of performance data presented, and the focus on the narrow areas in the 2020 Plan contributed to the latest findings.

It is necessary to be clear on who knew what and when, and establish if concerns were or were not acted upon in a timely manner.

A clear mechanism for reporting to and informing Members of the progress is necessary.

Council requests, in the interests of children we seek to protect and serve, the following steps:

- a. regular progress reports on the work in hand to address the failings identified;
- b. the Council agenda must provide an opportunity for regular statements by the Cabinet Member responsible;
- c. arrangements are made for a specific question time so that the adequacy of the steps can be tested.

<i>Proposer:</i>	Cllr Phil Gilchrist 		<i>Seconder:</i>	Cllr Alan Brighthouse 
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