



# Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday, 25 March 2019</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>10.00 a.m.</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

This meeting will be webcast at  
<https://wirral.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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

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## AGENDA

### 1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary 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.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting have been printed and published. Any matters called in will be reported at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

## LEADER'S UPDATE

### 3. EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

**Key Decisions** – taken under delegated powers. Period 15 February, 2019 (date of publication of last Cabinet agenda) to date.

- Wirral Ways to Work - ESF Programme Application (Key Decision) Cabinet Member Jobs and Growth. 7 March 2019. Call-in waived in respect of this decision (urgency).

**4. NOMINATION OF CIVIC MAYOR AND DEPUTY CIVIC MAYOR 2019/20**

The Cabinet is requested to make nominations for the positions of Civic Mayor and Deputy Civic Mayor for the municipal year 2019/2020, which will be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

**CABINET MEMBER REPORTS**

- 5. WIRRAL WATERS: HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND**  
(Pages 1 - 8)
- 6. WIRRAL WATERS INVESTMENT FUND - APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**  
(Pages 9 - 18)
- 7. TRANSPORT PLAN FOR GROWTH 2019/20** (Pages 19 - 30)
- 8. HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2019/20**  
(Pages 31 - 42)
- 9. NEW MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS**  
(Pages 43 - 80)
- 10. CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2019 -2022 AND MARKET POSITION STATEMENT** (Pages 81 - 116)
- 11. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

- 12. WIRRAL WATERS: HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND**  
(Pages 117 - 120)  
(Report item 5 - exempt appendix)
- 13. WIRRAL WATERS INVESTMENT FUND - APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**  
(Pages 121 - 176)  
(Report item 6 - exempt appendices)

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**COUNCILLOR  
GEORGE DAVIES**

**CABINET  
25 MARCH 2019**

**WIRRAL WATERS: HOUSING  
INFRASTRUCTURE FUND**

**Councillor George Davies, said:**

“This is fantastic news for Wirral residents. We have said time and again we are determined to maximise every square inch of brownfield land for residential development, as part of our commitment to protecting our precious green belt.

“The funding we have secured will help accelerate residential development on the Wirral Waters site, bringing much-needed new homes to Birkenhead.

“Wirral residents can now look forward to major improvement works being carried out at the site, quickly leading to new, attractive homes being developed for families.”

**REPORT SUMMARY**

In November 2017, Wirral Council submitted a bid to central Government for £6,004,160 from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme, to support housing development in Wirral Waters. Wirral Waters is the only scheme within Wirral that met the HIF programme criteria. The process was highly competitive as the programme was heavily oversubscribed but in February 2018 central Government announced, in principle, that the bid from Wirral Council had been successful.

The funding will support the delivery of over 1,000 properties at Northbank, Wirral Waters which will include the Urban Splash development, the Belong Urban Village and the Wirral Waters One project. Together with the Wirral Waters One development, this scheme represents a step change to the residential offer in the East Wirral housing market. It will fund a range of infrastructure works which will unlock further residential and commercial development in Wirral Waters and add to the creation of a new community within the dockland area.

Following a process of due diligence by Homes England the scheme was formally approved in February 2019. This report sets out the detail of the HIF funded programme and seeks authority to accept the grant from Homes England and to allocate the funding to Peel Holdings to deliver the scheme.

The Wirral Plan has a pledge to deliver good quality housing that meets the needs of residents, through creating 3,500 new homes and improving a further 3,500 homes by 2020. The three residential developments at Wirral Waters will together result in some 1,106 residential units being delivered and, as they will be constructed on brownfield vacant land, it will help to reduce the pressures on development in Wirral's Green Belt.

The proposals contained in this report contribute to a number of the pledges within the Wirral Plan, including:

- Increase inward investment
- Greater job opportunities in Wirral
- Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents

The appendix to this report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person) under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

This is a key decision and affects all Wards within the Borough.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note the decision from Homes England, on behalf of Central Government, to award £6,004,160 to Wirral Council for delivery of Phase 1 of the regeneration of Wirral Waters, and the funding conditions as specified by Homes England in Appendix 1 to this report;
2. Delegate authority to the Director with Portfolio in consultation with the Director of Governance and Assurance to negotiate and conclude a grant agreement with Homes England to mirror the terms in Appendix 1;
3. Delegate authority to the Director with Portfolio in consultation with the Director of Governance and Assurance to negotiate and enter into a grant agreement with Peel Holdings Land and Property (UK) Limited to reflect and deliver the terms of the funding offer from Homes England.
4. Authorise the Director with Portfolio to ensure the scheme is delivered, and that monitoring and progress reports are provided, in accordance with the conditions of the grant agreement.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The approval of the funding agreements will enable the Council to access £6,004,160 worth of grant from Homes England and transfer this grant to Peel Holdings. This will enable the delivery of the long-awaited first phase of development to begin, resulting in the delivery of around 1,000 new properties. Through developing a new, successful housing market, the delivery of the first phase will build up the confidence and momentum which will unlock the wider regeneration of Wirral Waters, including the development of 13,500 new homes.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

#### **2.1 Do Nothing**

Under this option, the Council would not secure grant funding for the development at Wirral Waters. Development would therefore be left to the market. For some time, Peel have had outline planning permission in place for the development of Wirral Waters, East Float. However, the option of leaving this to the market has proved unviable. A number of barriers to viability have been identified, including:

- Low end values and the need for high quality new homes in the initial stages of delivery to raise quality and values to allow profits to be recycled into future phases;
- The need to deliver appropriate site infrastructure integrated within initial projects and the impact of costs on viability;
- The provision of high quality local amenities to attract employers, employees, residents and visitors.

The cumulative effect of these barriers is to render the scheme unviable for the landowners, Peel, to develop. Therefore under the do nothing approach (and leaving this development to the market) it is highly unlikely that any development would take place, at least unless and until there was a significant market upturn, which is itself unlikely in an area with no housing market.

By addressing these barriers, and building confidence and momentum through high quality development, Peel will be able to commence development and stimulate confidence in the wider development.

#### **2.2 Alternative options for housing development at East Float Wirral Waters**

Planning Permission for East Float was approved in May 2012. A number of options for Northbank have been developed looking at place making, scale, height, density, unit types, parking, informed by market testing and viability. Funding support is required given the viability issues associated with the site for these to progress.

Initial options included higher rise perimeter blocks with towers and podium parking. This was unviable due to the high costs of building structure and piling. Later options included lower buildings with taller towers at key points and at grade parking. This was unviable due to the lower densities created by extensive at grade parking areas.

The preferred option is to progress medium rise typologies with managed parking - 'at grade', covered with amenity space and in curtilage - together with a high quality public realm and public transport infrastructure. The soft market testing has confirmed that a high quality environment, public realm and distinct residential typologies are needed to build confidence, attract market interest and raise values. This option will not be delivered without the Housing Infrastructure funding.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Wirral Waters is one of the largest regeneration project in the UK, focused on transforming the semi-derelict Birkenhead dock system. A mixed use, sustainable development, the scheme has the potential to create up to 20,000 jobs. Housing is a key feature of Wirral Waters, with outline planning permission in place for up to 13,500 units to be developed over the next 25 years. Government Enterprise Zone status was secured in 2011 and the area was awarded Housing Zone status in 2017 – recognising the opportunity for housing growth within the scheme.
- 3.2 In November 2017, Wirral Council submitted a bid to central Government for funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund – Marginal Viability Fund. The HIF criteria requires sites to be within areas designated by the Government as Housing Zones and there are three Housing Zones within Wirral – Bromborough, New Ferry and Wirral Waters. Northbank, East Float Wirral Waters was the only one of these sites to be sufficiently developed to meet the full HIF criteria.
- 3.3 HIF grants from Homes England can only be offered to local authorities, though it is recognised that in many cases (as in this one), the Council will then enter into an agreement with a private sector landowner to enable the transfer of funding to them. The process was highly competitive as the programme was heavily oversubscribed but in February 2018 central Government announced, in principle, that the bid from Wirral Council had been successful. This was the only scheme within the Liverpool City Region which secured support.
- 3.4 Starting in the autumn of 2018 Homes England (on behalf of central Government) and their appointed consultants conducted a lengthy process of clarification and due diligence on the scheme. In November, the scheme was approved by Homes England's Investment Panel, and an initial grant agreement was issued to the Council. Further negotiations then took place with Homes England on a number of the grant conditions and a final grant agreement was issued by Homes England in February 2019.
- 3.5 The grant of £6,004,160 from the Housing Infrastructure Fund has been awarded for allocation by March 2021 in order to unlock further residential development. This grant will enable the delivery of a package of infrastructure works including land remediation, public realm works, and utilities provision. Delivery of these works will enable the delivery of 1106 residential units at Wirral Waters including the Urban Splash development, the Belong Urban Village, and the Wirral Waters One project. Through the delivery of a significant and successful first phase of development, it is anticipated that a new housing market will be developed, with confidence and momentum which will enable the wider development of some 13,500 homes to proceed.
- 3.6 The infrastructure to be delivered is all contained within land owned by Peel Holdings or within the Council's public highway. Numerous surveys and

investigations have previously been undertaken on the sites, and the design and specification of the works are well underway.

- 3.7 The project forms part of the wider portfolio of growth projects within the Economic and Housing Growth Directorate. Oversight and decision making will be in line with the corporate framework.

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The funding summary from the successful bid is as follows:

<b>Works</b>	<b>HIF Funding</b>
North Bank East Remediation	£585,836
North Bank East Services & Utilities	£229,950
North Bank East Dock Edge Public Realm	£805,350
North Bank East Public Square	£516,000
North Bank West Remediation	£318,369
North Bank West Services & Utilities	£283,500
North Bank West Dock Edge Public Realm	£447,592
North Bank West Dock Road Public Realm	£350,127
Urban Splash Enabling Works	£2,467,436
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,004,160</b>

#### 5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The grant conditions from Homes England are attached at Exempt Appendix 1. State Aid advice, as required by Homes England, has been sought.
- 5.2 The conditions are summarised below. Where those conditions are 'pre-contract' they are to be complied with prior to the signing of a funding agreement with Homes England. Where they are 'pre-drawdown' they will be complied with prior to the Council being able to draw down funding from Homes England (and therefore prior to Peel being able to draw down funding from the Council):

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Stage in Process</b>
Peel to provide a detailed procurement strategy for the infrastructure works.	Pre-contract
Provision of State Aid advice to confirm the proposed funding and delivery mechanism is appropriate.	Pre-contract
Detailed planning consent is granted for the infrastructure works, including remediation, within a timescale that will enable the works to be completed by March 2021.	Pre-contract
Site investigation undertaken and remediation strategy in place.	Pre-contract
Identification of all necessary statutory consents.	Pre-contract
Receipt of the required consents.	Pre-drawdown

Confirmation that STEP funding of £500,000 has been unconditionally granted and is available to draw down.	Pre-contract
Detailed planning consents for all residential parcels within Phase 1 being granted.	Pre-contract
Provision of an updated development appraisal.	Pre-contract
Procurement of a suitably qualified contractor(s) to undertake the infrastructure works.	Pre-drawdown
If the final tender price for the infrastructure works is lower than £6,004,160, MVF grant will reduce by a corresponding amount. Any cost over-runs will be borne by the developer.	Pre-drawdown
The Council should seek to recover the gap grant funding from the overall Wirral Waters project on either the first or all future phases subject to viability assessments made on monitoring returns	Pre-drawdown

## 6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 Any resource implications will be met from existing budgets.

## 7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to secure planning permission for the scheme	This is a low risk because outline planning permission has already been secured.
Failure to deliver the scheme or meet the milestones/timescales agreed with HE which could result in claw back of the grant from HE	A detailed work programme is in place and being reviewed to reflect the protracted timescales involved in the Homes England clarification process. A delivery group and Project Board is in place to ensure oversight. Any conditions from HE relating to spend requirements will be passed onto Peel through the funding agreement
Cost overrun	Detailed design work has already been conducted. Cost overruns will be borne by Peel under the terms of the funding agreement.
Supply chain issues	An experienced developer, the use of modular construction, and monitoring and governance arrangements for the work programme will enable corrective action to be taken if appropriate.
Ground conditions	Site already in developer ownership and detailed site investigations have been undertaken

## 8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation has taken place on the planning application for Wirral Waters One and will take place as part of the planning applications that will be submitted to the Council.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Yes. The potential impact has been reviewed with regard to equality. This links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

## **10. REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Homes England: Housing Infrastructure Fund – Application form

Homes England: Assurance Framework for the Housing Infrastructure Fund – Marginal Viability Funding

Housing Infrastructure Fund Submission to the Homes and Communities Agency – Exempt

Homes England Letter: Subject to Grant Determination Agreement - Exempt

**REPORT AUTHOR: Sally Shah**

Lead Commissioner: Place and Investment

telephone: (0151) 691 8948

email: [sallyshah@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:sallyshah@wirral.gov.uk)

**APPENDIX** – Exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

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**COUNCILLOR  
ANGELA DAVIES**

**CABINET**

**25 MARCH 2019**

**WIRRAL WATERS INVESTMENT FUND –  
APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE**

**Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth said:**

“The Wirral Waters Investment Fund is there to kick-start regeneration at the site. This proposal is to support a major development at Wirral Waters, helping to bring more businesses and growth to the area.”

**REPORT SUMMARY**

Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited has requested a grant of £1,500,000 from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to support the delivery of Marine Energy and Automotive (MEA) Park Phase 2, which comprises 12 new industrial units for light industrial uses as part of the wider MEA Park Masterplan, which is targeted to provide a sector-focused environment to support business growth and capacity.

The Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision sets out the vision for the borough and has economic growth at its heart to ensure residents are able to access good, high paying jobs in a stable and thriving economy. The Plan identifies 20 key pledges that the Council, and its partner agencies, must deliver and the application for financial assistance contained in this report directly supports the following pledges:

- Increase inward investment
- Workforce skills match business needs
- Greater job opportunities
- Thriving small businesses

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The decision is regarded as a key decision.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves a grant to Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited through the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to support the development of new high quality industrial floorspace;
2. Authorises the Director of Governance and Assurance in consultation with the Corporate Director of Business Management to draw up and sign a legal agreement between the Council and Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited that is within State Aid regulations and subject to the conditions contained in Appendix 1 to this report.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 To enable Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited to create new, high-quality industrial floorspace at MEA Park Phase 2, to support the priorities of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund (WWIF).
- 1.2 To develop a sector-focused environment to support business growth and job creation in the supply chains of priority sectors, in line with the objectives of the Wirral Plan and Growth Plan and Liverpool City Region sector priorities.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited has requested a grant of £1,500,000 to support the delivery of Marine Energy and Automotive (MEA) Park Phase 2, which comprises 12 new industrial units for light industrial uses as part of the wider MEA Park Masterplan, which is targeted to provide a sector-focused environment to support business growth and capacity. The £5.98m project costs demonstrate a total viability gap of £1.5m.
- 2.2 The Council has considered a number of other options which were discounted as follows:
  - a) Provide a loan rather than grant: An independent appraisal of the application has concluded that the project is not currently viable and therefore requires grant funding through WWIF to facilitate development.
  - b) Adopt a 'do nothing' approach: The development would be jeopardised, as the project is reliant on securing funding from other public/private sources to meet the identified viability gap. This WWIF grant will enable the delivery of a high-quality industrial development which will support the Wirral Plan and Growth Plan and Liverpool City Region sector priorities. Without grant funding support the project may not proceed at all.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **Wirral Waters Investment Fund Background**

- 3.1 Cabinet approved the development of an investment framework for the reinvestment of business rate uplift within the Wirral Waters part of the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone at its 12 March 2015 meeting (Minute 156 refers). A further report was taken to Cabinet on 5 November 2015 where Members formally approved the creation and operation of the Wirral Waters Investment Fund and the incorporation of the investment potential for Phase 1 (£16m by 2020) into the Council's Capital Programme (Minute 62 refers). The Cabinet report also identified potential for the Fund to enable longer-term investment of up to £47m by 2037.
- 3.2 The Investment Fund has been created on the basis of reinvesting uplifted business rates and/or prudential borrowing against future business rates into the Enterprise Zone up to 2037, to support new projects through grants and loans and generate further business rates income. This will support the growth aspirations of the Wirral Plan and Wirral Growth Plan.

- 3.3 The area in and around the Birkenhead Dock system suffers from a number of inter-related market failures following decades of industrial decline and lack of investment. New development in the area is often not viable without some form of public sector support. The low values - and associated impact on viability - are caused by the historically poor external perceptions of the area, the lack of occupier confidence across all sectors and associated uncertainties about investment returns.
- 3.4 The Wirral Waters Investment Fund therefore provides a mechanism to support the following:
- **Development viability support** – funding support for commercial, industrial and residential development schemes, to close the gap between costs and values, allowing commercial development schemes to proceed.
  - **Land remediation and servicing** – on-site and off-site works to address poor ground conditions through land remediation and the installation of key services.
  - **Environmental improvements** – on-site and off-site works aimed at enhancing the quality of the environment across the Wirral Waters area including the improvement of road corridors and gateway locations.
  - **Infrastructure investment** – on-site and off-site works targeting specific infrastructure weaknesses to enhance access and traffic flows.
  - **High quality communities** – a programme of on-site and off-site investment aimed at enhancing amenity to create a sustainable environment for businesses and residents moving into the area.

#### **Wirral Waters Investment Fund Business Plan (August 2018)**

- 3.5 The latest Wirral Waters Investment Fund Business Plan (August 2018) included as Appendix 2 to this report provides an up-to-date investment appraisal of Phase 1 projects. It provides an update to previous business plans, based upon the refined assessment of the emerging pipeline of development projects.
- 3.6 The Business Plan sets out that intervention in the early years of the programme – if invested in the right projects and in the right cluster locations - will have a transformational impact in terms of attracting significant investment and enhancing the image of the area in and around Birkenhead.

#### **Wirral Waters Investment Fund Process**

- 3.7 GVA has been commissioned to provide expert advice and support for the assessment and appraisal of business cases submitted to the WWIF, ensuring robust due diligence is undertaken. This includes undertaking a site-by-site independent business case review; analysing the property market to support the public investment decision; and reviewing the financial returns to the Council.

#### **The Project**

- 3.8 Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited has applied for a grant of £1,500,000 viability support through the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to support the delivery of MEA Park Phase 2 which has a total project cost of £5,980,371. The project comprises 12 new industrial units for light industrial uses (at c. 69,000 sq ft) and external infrastructure works to support key sector development at West Float.

- 3.9 A site plan showing the extent of the boundary is included in Appendix 3.
- 3.10 The site forms part of the wider Marine, Energy and Automotive Park (MEA Park) Masterplan, which is targeted to provide a sector-focused environment to support business growth, and capacity in the local supply chains of these sectors, by enabling companies to gain efficiencies from modern premises, accommodate growth and benefit from clustering with businesses from similar sectors. The main sectors considered are energy/renewable energy related to offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea; automotive; aerospace; distribution and general manufacturing, which supports the aspirations of the Wirral Plan and Growth Plan and Liverpool City Region sector priorities.
- 3.11 Investment in the MEA Park Phase 2 development will also support the development of the Skills Factory and the Modular Development Centre (as detailed in the Wirral Waters Investment Fund Phase 1 Business Plan [August 2018] at Appendix 2) thereby enabling the local supply chain and SMEs to be well-positioned to take advantage of potential future contracts arising from those schemes.
- 3.12 The scale and configuration of the scheme has been designed to satisfy the requirements of small and medium sized businesses and the site will bring forward a derelict brownfield site for re-development.
- 3.13 At its meeting of 29 November 2018, the Investment and Change Board approved to progress to Cabinet the approval of £1,500,000 grant funding to Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited for MEA Park Phase 2 through the Wirral Waters Investment Fund, subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

### **Market Demand**

- 3.14 Wirral Council commissions Wirral Chamber of Commerce to provide support to businesses seeking to expand or relocate in Wirral. As part of this contract, the Chamber of Commerce provides regular business intelligence to ensure that the Council is fully aware of the requirements of existing and new business seeking to invest in Wirral.
- 3.15 Recent intelligence received from the Chamber of Commerce identifies that between April and June 2018 Legat Owen, a firm of Chartered Surveyors and Commercial Estate Agents, registered up to 60 individual enquiries for industrial floorspace in Wirral; largely for between 4,000- 5,000 sq ft of space.
- 3.16 According to the latest Chamber of Commerce intelligence, the most pronounced shortages in Wirral are currently for industrial premises up to 10,000 sqft, which has only been partly addressed by recent developments along the A41, at the Lightbox and Turbine Business Park. Wirral has a relative lack of high quality industrial units to support local investment projects, as well as inward investment enquiries, demonstrating a need for new, high-quality medium sized industrial units at MEA Park.

- 3.17 GVA has reviewed the market demand position for industrial uses in Wirral as part of the appraisal of the MEA Park Phase 2 application and conclude that the anticipated rent of £5.75 per sq ft is considered reasonable in the context of a high-quality product in what will become a high-demand area, with tenants of good covenant strength on decent lease terms.

### **Key Outputs**

- 3.18 The project will deliver approximately 69,000 sq ft of new industrial floorspace and will generate an estimated £3,069,937 for the Council in additional business rates within the Mersey Water Enterprise Zone from practical completion until 2037, at an average rate of £170,552 per annum.
- 3.19 The project is projected to create 67 new jobs (gross person years) during the construction phase and 154 (FTE) jobs following practical completion. It is also projected to leverage £4.48m of private sector investment during the construction phase and generate further investment by end users in the form of fit-out and ongoing operation.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 GVA has appraised the solvency of Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited as the applicant and conclude that, although the company has been given a credit score of D-9 by Creditsafe and is considered to be a high risk, it is important to look at the parent company Peel Holdings Land and Property (UK) Ltd which has a strong credit rating. Peel Holdings Land and Property (UK) Ltd also has a good track record in delivering projects. A condition of the grant funding would be that a guarantor agreement will be put in place with Peel Holdings Land and Property (UK) Ltd to provide additional security to the Council that Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited has the financial capacity to develop the project.
- 4.2 Project costs and funding arrangements are set out in Appendix 1 to this report. In addition to the grant request of £1.5m from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund, there will be £3,480,371 of private sector funding and a £1m loan from Chrysalis required to deliver the project. The private sector funding is in place and the loan has been agreed in principle by Chrysalis.
- 4.3 GVA has appraised that, once completed, this scheme will deliver approximately £3,069,937 for the Council in additional business rates from practical completion until 2037.
- 4.4 The project will provide the Council with an Internal Rate of Return of 7.15% on the investment (the Grant) and a Net Present Value of £115,194 at a target rate of return of 6.00% over the 20 year period. The payback of the initial capital investment through business rates would be by 2029. The project would make a positive financial return. A detailed breakdown of the return on investment to the Council is set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The financial implications set out above have been verified by the Council's finance service.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The offer of financial assistance is always subject to State Aid compliance. State Aid rules exist in order to prevent any form of aid to a commercial undertaking distorting, or threatening to distort, competition within the European Community.
- 5.2 Legal support have advised on the State Aid implications of the proposed £1,500,000 WWIF grant along with the proposed loan from Chrysalis fund of £1,000,000 and has advised that the funding can be State Aid compliant via potentially two alternative options:
- a) Within the requirements of Chapter 1 and Article 56 of the *General Block Exemption Regulation 2014* (Commission Regulation 651/2014 (OJ L 187/1 of 26 June 2014) as "investment in local infrastructure"; or
  - b) Alternatively, the project might proceed on the basis that if all relevant conditions for granting the Chrysalis loan have been satisfied, then State aid compliance for an additional grant required for overall viability may be assumed by reliance on the wording in the original (2011) European Commission State Aid decision (SA.32835 (2011/N), C(2011) 4942 at paragraph 2.9 (Combining repayable investments with grant funding) approving the *North West Urban Investment Fund* (JESSICA), of which Chrysalis is a part.
- 5.3 Once the process of approving the Chrysalis loan has been completely finalised legal support will advise as to which of the above options should be progressed as the State Aid compliant route.
- 5.4 Details of both State Aid options are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 5.5 The legal implications set out above have been verified by the Council's legal service.

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

- 6.1 The monitoring and management of the grant will be resourced through the existing work programmes of officers within the Council's Place and Investment Team.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 GVA has carried out a risk assessment of the project and has identified appropriate mitigation measures.
- 7.2 In terms of market demand, GVA has identified a risk of the property failing to secure end user occupiers, which would affect the ability of the Council to get a return on its investment. To mitigate this risk, a nine month rent free period for end users has been allowed as incentive and Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited has allowed for a marketing budget to deliver an effective marketing strategy. Furthermore, GVA's market demand review supports demand for the completed development.
- 7.3 In terms of costs, GVA has identified risks relating to increased costs being incurred, which could hinder the viability of the scheme and increase the Council's

liabilities for additional costs. To mitigate this risk, the funding agreement will ensure that any cost overruns will be Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited's liability and recommend that Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited should seek a fixed price construction contract to reduce uncertainty.

7.4 GVA has also identified a risk to the Council that Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited may not secure the additional funds required to bring forward this proposal. In order to mitigate this risk, Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited will be required to provide confirmation of match funding prior to grant being awarded.

7.5 A full risk register is included in Appendix 4 to this report.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 This report is consistent with the principles of Wirral Council's Growth Plan and Strategic Regeneration Framework, which identifies Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone as an identified and agreed area of significant growth potential.

8.2 The Growth Plan and Strategic Regeneration Framework have been informed by consultation which has taken place with a number of private sector partners and local businesses through Wirral Chamber of Commerce sector forums.

8.3 Consultation will take place as part of the planning application which will be submitted to the Council.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The potential impact has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Growth Plan.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Hannah Austin**  
*Economic Development Lead*  
Telephone: (0151 691 8297)  
Email: [hannahaustin@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:hannahaustin@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1:** Report to Investment and Change Board – Application for Financial Assistance (29 November 2018) **EXEMPT**

**Appendix 2:** Wirral Waters Investment Fund Package 1 Business Plan (August 2018) **EXEMPT**

**Appendix 3:** Site Location Plan **EXEMPT**

**Appendix 4:** Risk Register **EXEMPT**

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Appraisal Report  
State Aid Advice

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet 'Enterprise Zone – Re-Investment of Business Rate Uplift'	12 March 2015 (Minute 156)
Cabinet 'Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone – Investment Fund'	5 November 2015 (Minute 62)

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**COUNCILLOR STUART  
WHITTINGHAM**

**CABINET  
Monday, 25 March 2019**

**TRANSPORT PLAN FOR GROWTH  
2019/20**

**Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said:**

“Working with Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and our partners in the Liverpool City Region, we have been able to attract more than £1 million to Wirral to bring about a programme of transport infrastructure improvements throughout the borough, as part of our Transport Plan for Growth.

“This is great news for residents – major investment into our transport network to bring about real improvements.”

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

On the 1st February 2019, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority awarded £1,150,000 of Integrated Transport Block funding to Wirral Council, to support the delivery of the Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth during 2019/20. This report seeks Cabinet approval to accept the £1,150,000 and allocate it to priorities and projects as outlined in the report.

Wirral’s Transport Plan for Growth supports the Wirral Plan 2020 pledge to provide Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future by ensuring that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, leisure facilities and commute to work.

This is a Key Decision and affects all Wards within the Borough.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Approve the acceptance of £1,150,000 of Integrated Transport Block funding allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to support the delivery of the Transport Plan for Growth Programme;
- 2) Approve the proposed programme for this funding as set out in Appendix 1;
- 3) Delegate authority to the Interim Director Highways and Streetscene, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to make necessary adjustments to the priorities within the programme should the need arise due to financial or other factors.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

- 1.1 To ensure that the transport capital programme (Integrated Transport Block) reflects the Wirral Plan and the Transport Plan For Growth short-term implementation priorities, and has the flexibility to ensure delivery of the most effective schemes within the financial year.

## **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 None. The proposed programmes and projects identified within this report enable the Council to comply with its Statutory Duties as set out in the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 and address the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth, and the Council's Wirral Plan pledge to ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work.

## **3.0 TRANSPORT PLAN FOR GROWTH**

- 3.1 The Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth was endorsed by the Merseytravel Committee on the 12 February 2015 and approved by the Combined Authority on the 6th March 2015.
- 3.2 The Government has empowered authorities such as the Combined Authority to deliver sustainable growth. Transport policy is a key part of this and the Transport Plan for Growth is fundamental to the regeneration of the Liverpool City Region. It provides a platform for building on previous programmes of transport schemes and initiatives and ensures that the Local Transport Plans (LTP) remain relevant and up to date, focussing on the national agenda for growth, and facilitates a joint commitment amongst City Region partners to align resources in an effective and efficient way. All core Department for Transport (DfT) funds such as the Integrated Transport Block are to be allocated to deliver the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
- 3.3 On 1st February 2019, the Combined Authority approved the allocation available for 2019/20 for each district, which included £1,150,000 Integrated Transport Block for Wirral.
- 3.4 The Transport Plan for Growth builds on the vision and aims set out in the Merseyside and Halton LTPs. Both LTPs support the 2011 White Paper "Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen" which sets out the Government's commitment to providing a transport system that supports economic growth whilst also addressing air quality and carbon reduction.
- 3.5 The Transport Plan for Growth is the key policy framework for future transport provision and consolidates Merseyside and Halton LTPs to provide a "strategic direction for transport which supports growth, regeneration and carbon reduction". The Plan articulates how transport in the Liverpool City Region will

support wider strategic priorities in relation to health, housing, land use planning and economic development. Three priorities for transport have been defined:

- Growth
- Low Carbon
- Access to Opportunity

The Transport Plan for Growth is clearly aligned with the Growth Plan and other strategic plans guiding the Liverpool City Region and it is integral to, and supportive of, the City Region-wide work being undertaken in terms of housing and planning, employment and skills, economic development and the visitor economy.

The Transport Plan for Growth demonstrates how transport supports the wider strategic priorities of the City Region in terms of:

- Freight and Logistics
- Housing and Land-use planning
- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Employment and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Carbon Reduction and Air Quality
- Connecting Communities
- Visitor Economy

Key priorities within the Transport Plan for Growth aim to deliver the following outputs/outcomes:

**Table 1:**

<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Growth</b>	Supporting Freight and Logistics	Strengthening the City Regions competitiveness, support Superport and access to the Port, reduce the impact of freight movement on local communities, promote the use of rail and make a major contribution to skills and employment opportunities.
	Maintaining and efficient and reliable highway network	Ensuring the network allows for the efficient and safe movement of people and goods, provides a safer environment for cycling & walking, and maintenance of existing assets central to achieving this.
	Closer integration with other sector strategies and plans	Provide a robust planning framework linking transport and future developments such as housing, tourism and infrastructure development in ways that can encourage the right level of investment, reduce long distance travel, improve accessibility and provide a

		framework for future funding.
<b>Low Carbon</b>	Lowering transport emissions	Reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and improve health and provide a stimulus to the creation of new technologies in support of the City Region low carbon priorities.
	Delivering active travel	Improve and expanded facilities to encourage cycling and walking makes a significant contribution towards health and wellbeing, and to facilitate an efficient and healthy transport network.
<b>Access to Opportunity</b>	Improving Public Transport	To introduce further Bus Quality partnership schemes on key routes and continued investment on the rail network. This is to manage costly and inefficient congestion on the highway network. It will have a direct impact in disadvantaged areas, creating greater opportunities to travel, access employment and encourage a switch away from the private car, and foster wellbeing.
	Improve access to key employers and services	Supporting people who live in our most disadvantaged communities to access training and employment opportunities and other services that impact on their quality of life.
	Improving road safety	Introduce measures to encourage carbon reduction, promote sustainable transport and reduce the number and severity of road casualties.

The Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth will be delivered using funds from several sources including Highways Maintenance Funding, the Combined Authority’s transport levy, the Local Growth Fund, European Funding and the Integrated Transport Block.

#### **4.0 WIRRAL’S TRANSPORT PLAN FOR GROWTH PROGRAMME**

##### **4.1 Overview**

Each of the Liverpool City Region partner authorities have developed their own Capital Programme which, when combined, form a Liverpool City Region-wide Implementation Plan. The programme also supports the Wirral Plan 2020 pledge to provide ‘Transport and Technology Infrastructure Fit for the Future’ and the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy to ‘ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work’.

**Appendix 1** presents the proposed Transport Plan for Growth delivery programme of £1,150,000. Wirral's Transport Plan for Growth programme has been formulated to reflect the key Transport Plan for Growth priorities and support the delivery of the outcomes set out in Table 1.

## **4.2 Growth**

Road Safety initiatives have a major impact in reducing the number and severity of casualties on Wirral's roads and, thereby making a contribution to tackling the negative impacts on the local economy and supporting the Council's Growth Plan.

Such schemes and programmes address the obligations required as part of the Council's Statutory Duties (as set out in the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004) and are proven with evidential information (e.g. DFT Road Safety Research Report no.108 'contribution of Local Safety Schemes to Casualty Reduction') to reduce road accident casualties.

A number of proposed schemes and projects identified as having a direct impact on 'driving growth & improving road safety' will also by their very nature exhibit cross-benefits with other priority headings such as 'enabling access to opportunity' or 'supporting a low carbon environment'.

## **4.3 Enabling Access to Opportunity**

Schemes have been developed that will encourage walking and cycling where it is safe and attractive to do so, thereby promoting a carbon friendly, sustainable and healthy alternative mode of transport supporting the Council's priority to 'drive growth' and to 'enable access to opportunity'. These schemes are also designed to complement the terms of reference adopted by the Wirral Active Travel Forum that advocate and promote safe, accessible and usable facilities and routes across the borough, making walking and cycling more attractive and accessible to residents, visitors, employees and businesses. This investment in infrastructure and safety for cyclists and pedestrians will also contribute to reducing the number and severity of casualties on the road network.

A programme of improvements will also continue to be identified, prioritised and implemented to support the delivery of the Liverpool City Region Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2018-2028).

Opportunities to draw on external funding in this area to complement the ITB programme will also be explored. Such schemes by their very nature help to promote a healthy lifestyle and contribute to a reduction in Wirral's carbon footprint. Should any such funding application be successful, the Interim Director Highways and Streetscene, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, shall be given delegated authority to identify suitable additional, enhanced or replacement schemes.

#### **4.4 Supporting a Low Carbon Environment**

A number of schemes and projects within the programme directly support the priority of a 'Low Carbon' Environment', in particular through the investment of infrastructure and improvement of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. Other schemes and projects may include the implementation of the 'next generation' technology to improve information systems and help maintain free-flowing networks, increase journey opportunities and integrate a wide range of transport uses such as the replacement of existing obsolete or ageing technology and the upgrading of pedestrian facilities.

In order to continue to support sustainable travel, funding has also been allocated to implement measures to encourage active travel and reduce single occupancy car trips.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 All schemes are funded from the Combined Authority allocation for Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding for 2019/20 totalling £1,150,000 and will be added to the Council's Capital Programme for 2019/20.

#### **6.0 LEGAL**

6.1 The Council has statutory duties as defined by the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

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

7.1 All schemes are funded from the Combined Authority allocation for Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding for 2019/20 and will be added to the Council's Capital Programme for 2019/20. Existing staff resources will be used for the detailed investigation, design and supervision of these schemes, supplemented by external support where required. Future revenue maintenance costs will be met from the Highway Maintenance Revenue Budget.

#### **8.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

8.1 Failure to undertake the identified programme of works could result in the Council not meeting its Statutory Duties as set out in the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

8.2 Failure to undertake the identified programme of works would also result in a failure to support the delivery of the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth and the Council's pledge to ensure that Wirral has Transport and Technology Infrastructure Fit for the Future. Consequently, this could result in the loss or clawback of funding.

8.3 The list of schemes identified has been prepared with initial estimates, however it should be noted that final schemes will be subject to the costing of

detailed designs and statutory undertakers' works and further detailed investigations will be required prior to any final scheme being designed. Some of these schemes may also be subject to the requirement of a Traffic Regulation Order(s), and delivery may be dependent on resolving objections to proposals during consultation.

- 8.4 Should any of the schemes identified be found to be not viable upon further detailed investigation, or be completed for less than the indicative cost, it is recommended that the Interim Director for Highways and Streetscene, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport shall be given delegated authority to identify suitable additional or replacement schemes.

## **9.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 Detailed scheme proposals will be subject to further Public and Ward Councillor consultation as appropriate and engagement with other interested bodies (Merseytravel, Active Travel Forum etc.).

## **10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 As part of the development of LTP3, a comprehensive Integrated Assessment (IA) was carried out in accordance with Government LTP Guidance. The IA included a number of assessments, including an Equality Impact Assessment that can demonstrate that there are no negative implications associated with the implementation of these activities on the 'protected characteristics'. The proposed programme of works that supports the Transport Plan for Growth strategy includes measures to assist the transport needs of all sections of the community.

**REPORT AUTHOR:**           **Mark Smith**  
**Interim Director Highways and Streetscene**  
telephone: (0151) 606 2103  
email: marksmith@wirral.gov.uk

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1:**

2019/20 Transport Plan for Growth (Integrated Transport Block) Proposed Programme

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - 'A Transport Plan for Growth':

<https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/8375%20Plan%20for%20growth%20WEB%20FINAL.pdf>

DFT Road Safety Research Report no.108 'Contribution of Local Safety Schemes to Casualty Reduction':

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme5/rsrr108findings.pdf>

Draft Rights of Ways Improvement Plan 2 for Merseyside 2018 - 2028:  
<http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Pages/Public-Rights-of-Way-Strategy.aspx>

LTP3 Integrated Assessment  
<http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/LTP3/Annexe%2014%20-%20Integrated%20Assessment.pdf>

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>CABINET</b> Transport Plan for Growth Programme 2018/19	<b>26<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>
<b>CABINET</b> Transport Plan for Growth Programme 2017/18	<b>27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017</b>
<b>CABINET</b> Transport Plan for Growth Programme 2016/17	<b>18th July 2016</b>
<b>CABINET</b> (Local Transport Capital Funding & The Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Programme 2015/16)	<b>20th July 2015</b>

## 2019/20 ITB – TRANSPORT PLAN FOR GROWTH CAPITAL PROGRAMME – PROPOSED PROJECTS

LOCATION	OUTCOMES	CONNECTING WIRRAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY PRIORITIES	SUPPORTING PRIORITIES	£
Asset Improvement – Grove Road/Rolleston Road, Wallasey	Upgrade pedestrian facilities and traffic signal cables	Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently; Encourage healthy active travel	Promote cycling/walking; Accessibility/connectivity; Reduce pollution/carbon; Improve road safety	£130,000
Asset Improvement – Old Chester Road/Bebington Road, Bebington	Upgrade traffic signals including LED signal heads, Puffin type pedestrian crossing facilities and change signal staging to assist buses	Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently; Encourage healthy active travel	Promote cycling/walking; Public transport improvements; Accessibility/connectivity; Reduce pollution/carbon; Improve road safety	£130,000
Asset Improvement – Technology at various locations	Upgrade traffic signals including Pelican to puffin conversions, installation of LED signal heads and replacing obsolete equipment	Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently; Encourage healthy active travel	Promote cycling/walking; Accessibility/connectivity; Reduce pollution/carbon; Improve road safety	£190,000
Local Safety Schemes	Home Farm Road & Meadow Crescent Traffic Calming; Poulton Road (Oxton Road to Wheatland Lane) Route Action Measures; Wheatland Lane (St Pauls Road to Poulton Road) Pedestrian Facilities; Eastham Village Speed Reduction Measures	Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently; Encourage healthy active travel	Promote cycling/walking; Accessibility/connectivity; Reduce pollution/carbon; Improve road safety	£200,000
Local Journey Strategy Schemes	Bidston Avenue Primary School pedestrian route improvements; Church Lane Woodchurch School pedestrian access improvements; Gayton Primary School pedestrian access improvements; St Georges Primary School safety measures; Sacred Heart Primary School pedestrian route improvements; Stanton Road pedestrian route improvements; School flashing light LED upgrades	Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently; Encourage healthy active travel	Promote cycling/walking; Accessibility/connectivity; Improve road safety	£150,000

SUD (Sustainable Urban Development) Bidston Golf Club Bridges	Two new bridges over River Birkett overflow plus path linking Leasowe/Moreton to Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone	Encourage healthy active travel	Linkages to growth sites; Promote cycling/walking; Accessibility/connectivity; Reduce pollution/carbon	£100,000
Docks Link Safety Improvement	Upgraded Vehicle Restraint System barriers to meet current design standards and ensure vehicle safety	Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently; Linkages to growth sites	Improve road safety	£100,000
Pedestrian Access Improvements – various locations	Dropped kerb facilities focusing on key strategic routes to employment, healthcare, shopping areas etc.	Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently; Encourage healthy active travel	Linkages to growth sites; Promote cycling/walking; Public transport improvements; Accessibility/connectivity; Reduce pollution/carbon; Improve road safety	£100,000
Public Rights of Way Improvements – various locations	Various low-cost measures to improve Wirral's Footpaths, Bridleways and 'Byways Open to All Traffic'	Encourage health active travel	Promote cycling/walking; Accessibility/connectivity	£50,000

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**COUNCILLOR STUART  
WHITTINGHAM**

**CABINET  
MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2019**

**HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE  
PROGRAMME 2019/20**

**Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport said:**

“The quality of roads and highways is a big priority for residents, which puts it at the top of our agenda too. Wirral residents expect to travel on a transport network which is safe, efficient and of a high quality.

“This is what we work every day towards delivering and I am delighted we are now in a position to go even further. We are allocating nearly £5 million to ensure our transport infrastructure is fit for the future – improving our roads and making sure Wirral residents benefit from a first-rate highway network.

“This investment is thanks to our work with Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and our colleagues across the Liverpool City Region. It will help bring about further growth in our economy and ensure road users across Wirral continue to experience efficient and safer journeys on our highways”.

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority awarded £2,625,000 of Highways Maintenance funding to Wirral Council to support investment in our highways assets. This is in addition to a further £315,000 from the LCR Combined Authority especially for the Route Network and £1,465,000 extra funding from the Department for Transport Key (DfT) awarded late last year. The Council has also recently allocated £500,000 from its own Capital Programme for Unclassified Roads.

This report seeks Cabinet approval to accept this funding and allocate it between Roads/Footways, Bridges and Street Lighting. It also requests approval for the first

phase of the Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2019/20 for Classified Roads.

This funding will support the delivery of the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy and the Wirral Plan Pledge to provide transport and technology infrastructure fit for the future, and will ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well-maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work.

The maintenance of highways is a statutory duty for the Council under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

This is a key decision and all wards are affected.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

Cabinet is requested to:-

- 1) Approve the acceptance of £2,625,000 of Highway Maintenance funding for 2019/20 awarded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority;
- 2) Approve the acceptance of £315,000 additional funding for the Key Route Network awarded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority;
- 3) Approve the acceptance of £1,465,000 Highway Maintenance funding from the Department for Transport (DfT);
- 4) Approve the proposed allocation of the Highway maintenance funding between Roads/Footways, Bridges and Street Lighting;
- 5) Approve the detailed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2019/20 for Classified roads as outlined in Appendix 1;
- 6) Authorise the Interim Director Highways & Streetscene in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to make necessary adjustments to the programme should the need arise due to financial, asset conditions or other factors.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

- 1.1 Allocations for capital highway maintenance funding are now made from the transport fund element of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority's Single Investment Fund (SIF).
- 1.2 The investment in the maintenance of the highway network will enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty to maintain the highway. The establishment of a prioritised programme allows both transparency that the Council is addressing those highway elements in greatest need of maintenance and proper management of the allocated finances, and to permit co-ordination of roadworks with the utilities' programmes of work.
- 1.3 Due to the age of the assets along with winter salting and freeze/thaw action which has a detrimental effect on the condition of highway surfaces, allowing further degradation due to the ingress of water, asset condition priorities may change as a consequence of the current winter's weather.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 None. The programme is based on meeting the highest priority needs within the funding available against the condition and assessment criteria.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ALLOCATION OF FUNDING BETWEEN ROADS/FOOTWAYS, BRIDGES AND STREET LIGHTING**

- 3.1 The highway network and other transport infrastructure assets together represent by far the largest capital asset the Council holds, and the value of replacing those assets is estimated to be £2.48 billion. The highway network for which Wirral Council is responsible comprises approximately 1,200 kilometres of road.
- 3.2 All LCR transport funds now form part of the Single Investment Fund (SIF) which is governed by an Assurance Framework. In 2016/17 it was agreed that this funding would be allocated to districts formulaically without the need for further prioritisation.
- 3.3 At the meeting of the Combined Authority on 2nd February 2017 it was further agreed that this approach would be generally retained, however with the additional establishment of an allocation of funding specifically for the LCR Key Route Network, which is the agreed network of strategic roads across the City Region. This allocation of £315,000 has been based on the outputs of the LCR-wide Carriageway Asset Management Plan.
- 3.4 The £2,625,000 allocation from the Combined Authority and £1,465,000 from the DFT is intended for all highway infrastructure maintenance. An assessment of the priority structural needs of the Roads/Footways, Bridges

and Street Lighting elements of the network has been undertaken and the funding has been allocated accordingly.

3.5 Accordingly, Cabinet is now recommended to approve the allocation of this funding as per Table 1 below.

Resources	Proposed Allocation
LCR Combined Authority = £2,625,000	Roads & Footways – Main (Classified) Roads and KRN ( <b>detailed programme in Appendix 1</b> ) = £2,115,000
LCR Combined Authority KRN = £315,000	Roads & Footways - Local (Unclassified) Roads ( <b>detailed programme in future report</b> ) = £2,540,000
Department for Transport = £1,465,000	Bridges – works for retaining walls and minor bridges = £150,000
Council Capital = £500,000	Street Lighting – works to address long-standing power supply issues such as cable faults on Principal Roads = £100,000
£4,905,000	£4,905,000

*Table 1: Allocation of the Highway Maintenance Capital Programme 2019/20*

#### 4.0 ROADS AND FOOTWAYS - NETWORK CONDITION AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

4.1 In order to fulfil its duty to maintain the highway, it is necessary to consider how the Council will prioritise the maintenance schemes to be undertaken and what treatment the prioritised schemes should comprise in order to repair and prevent further deterioration of those lengths of road and footway. The following criteria are used in carrying out this analysis:

(i) In accordance with national best practice the Council undertakes surveys of the highway network in order to determine the condition of the carriageways.

(ii) Areas of constant repairs; mainly due to vehicle over-ride; are highlighted in the Highway Inspectors' safety inspections.

(iii) Particular roads brought to the Council's attention, as warranting significant repair, by Constituency Committees, Ward Councillors, the

public and Streetscene officers.

(iv) Feedback from the Council’s Highway Operations regarding the suitability of different repair solutions depending on the existing road condition and use.

4.2 All Ward Councillors were given the opportunity to contribute to the proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for roads and footways and submit lists of roads they considered to be local priorities for significant repair. The programme of schemes is set out in the Appendix and Ward Councillor priorities are denoted on those schemes with a “C”.

4.3 From the surveys undertaken, the existing condition of the highway network is reported through a small number of former National Indicators (NI). Choices relating to structural repairs to carriageway surfacing is dependent on a number of factors including cost, traffic flows and type and the condition of the underlying road and foundation. Certain routes require more expensive and durable surfacing whereas in other cases the priority, particularly on relatively lowly trafficked routes, is to prevent further deterioration of the road surface by sealing against ingress of water, whilst restoring skid resistance.

4.4 The road condition network is shown in Table 2 and details the last seven years. All the recorded measurements indicate the percentage of the network that requires immediate maintenance for each classification of road. The condition of the Principal and Non-Principal Classified roads are key measures in the achievement of the *Connecting Wirral* Transport Strategy.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2018/19
<b>Principal Roads</b>	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
<b>Non-Principal Classified Roads</b>	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
<b>Unclassified Roads</b>	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	9%

Table 2: Condition Data – percentage of the network that requires immediate maintenance

## 5.0 PROPOSED ROADS AND FOOTWAYS STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2019/20

5.1 The proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for Classified roads (Hot Rolled Asphalt or Surface Dressing schemes) for 2019/20 is set out in the

attached **Appendix 1** and has been prepared taking into account the funding described in Section 3.0 and the priorities assessed from the criteria described in Section 4.0. All of the schemes in the programme have been identified from the surveys as requiring maintenance intervention now.

- 5.2 It is proposed that £2,115,000 is allocated to deliver this programme which includes the £315,000 KRN allocation.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the detailed programme for the £2,540,000 allocation for local (Unclassified) roads **will be the subject of a future report.**
- 5.4 In terms of valuing the benefits of Highways Maintenance, the Department for Transport (DfT) has published a model to value the benefits of maintenance that can be used by local highway authorities making decisions on maintenance funding; allowing local highway authorities to assess the economic cost and benefits of their proposed asset management strategies and compare between different options. Whilst detailed modelling has yet to be carried out for Wirral's proposals, the DfT cite that compared with continued use of a current budget, a scenario of a temporarily increased budget provides a benefit in terms of reduced user costs of £2.70 (discounted) for each extra £1 spent on direct works costs This helps to negate the impact of past years' revenue cuts. Similarly, reducing the budget for 5 years resulted in a reduction in benefits of £2.90 for every £1 saved in direct costs.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The financial resources covered by this report are summarised in table 1.

## **7.0 LEGAL**

- 7.1 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on the Council, as Highway Authority, to maintain highways at the public expense.

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

- 8.1 Existing staff resources will be used for the detailed investigation, design and monitoring of these schemes. Maintenance activity will be carried out through the Highways Service or discrete contracts as appropriate.
- 8.2 Preventative maintenance to the highway assets will increase their residual life and asset value, and future spending will be targeted to maintain the carriageway and bridges condition indicators at their current level.

## **9.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 9.1 The duty to maintain the highway is achieved in part through structural maintenance of carriageways, footways, bridges, highway structures and lighting and withdrawal or reduction of funding would mean that that duty would not be met to the same degree.
- 9.2 As with most highway authorities, the network is deteriorating, and without a structural maintenance programme to address the highest priority routes, then

the network will deteriorate further, the asset value will decrease and the cost of carrying much greater maintenance at a later date will be disproportionately higher.

- 9.3 Withdrawal of funding would lead to the deterioration of the network. This would have an adverse effect on the amount of substantiated claims received by the authority for slips, trips and falls together with road traffic accidents.
- 9.4 There is no formal agreement from the Combined Authority beyond 2018/19 financial year as to how Highway Maintenance funds will be allocated
- 9.5 Allocations to the Combined Authority post 2021 are subject to all LCR authorities improving their DfT Incentive Fund Self-Assessment to a Level 3 score. Currently Wirral Council are at Level 2 but as per the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy are working to achieve Level 3.

## **10.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Local Ward Councillors have been consulted as described in Section 3.7.

## **11.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?
- (a) Yes and impact review is attached – (*insert appropriate hyperlink*).

**REPORT AUTHOR: Mark Smith**  
**Interim Director of Highways & Streetscene**  
**Tel: 0151 606 2103**  
**Email: marksmith@wirral.gov.uk**

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Proposed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for Classified Roads 2019/20

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

United Kingdom Pavement Management Systems (UKPMS) Survey Condition Data held by the report author.

Single Data List Items (Former National Indicators N.I.168, N.I.169 and former BVPI 224b.) held by the report author.

DfT Guidance on the benefits of highway maintenance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-highways-maintenance-economic-costs-and-benefits-tool>

<http://liverpoolcityregion->

[ca.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/meetings/LCRCA\\_Agenda\\_020218.pdf](http://ca.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/meetings/LCRCA_Agenda_020218.pdf)

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Cabinet – Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2018/19</b>	<b>26 March 2018</b>
<b>Cabinet – Highway Maintenance Funding and Structural Maintenance Programme 2016/17</b>	<b>27 February 2017</b>
<b>Cabinet – Highway Maintenance Funding and Structural Maintenance Programme 2016/17</b>	<b>7 March 2016</b>
<b>Council – Budget</b>	<b>3 March 2016</b>
<b>Cabinet – Capital Programme and Financing 2016/19</b>	<b>22 February 2016</b>
<b>Council – Budget</b>	<b>24 February 2015</b>
<b>Cabinet - Highway Maintenance Funding and Structural Maintenance Programme 2015/16</b>	<b>10 February 2015</b>
<b>Cabinet – Capital Programme and Financing 2015/18</b>	<b>10 February 2015</b>

ROAD NAME	LIMITS	WARD	OTHER PRIORITIES	ESTIMATE	WORKS DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION	CONSTITUENCY
KING STREET	MADDOCK ROAD TO CHURCH STREET	LISCARD	<b>C</b>	£149,625	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WALLASEY
BANKS ROAD	NORTH ROAD TO SOUTH ROAD - EAST CARRIAGEWAY ONLY	WEST KIRBY & THURSTASTON / HOYLAKES & MEOLS		£37,002	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
KELVIN ROAD	WHEATLAND LANE TO BIRKENHEAD ROAD	SEACOMBE	<b>C</b>	£66,612	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WALLASEY
OLD CHESTER ROAD	220 BEBINGTON ROAD TO TOWN LANE	ROCK FERRY / BEBINGTON	<b>C</b>	£130,200	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD / WIRRAL SOUTH
MONTGOMERY HILL	APPROACH TO ROUNDABOUT	WEST KIRBY & THURSTASTON		£41,454	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
GROVE ROAD	DEAN AVENUE TO CONISTON AVENUE	WALLASEY	<b>C</b>	£73,584	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'C' ROAD	WALLASEY
LISCARD VILLAGE	RAKE LANE TO LISCARD CRESENT	LISCARD		£31,962	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WALLASEY
POULTON ROAD	ILCHESTER ROAD TO HALVILLE ROAD	SEACOMBE		£79,527	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WALLASEY
WOODCHURCH ROAD	490 WOODCHURCH ROAD TO CARLAW ROAD	OXTON / PRENTON		£120,351	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
HOYLAKES ROAD	SUSAN GROVE TO ELY AVENUE	MORETON WEST & SAUGHALL MASSIE		£81,291	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WALLASEY

ROAD NAME	LIMITS	WARD	OTHER PRIORITIES	ESTIMATE	WORKS DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION	CONSTITUENCY
HOYLAKE ROAD	JUNCTION WITH MILLHOUSE LANE	MORETON WEST & SAUGHALL MASSIE		£40,005	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WALLASEY
CONWAY STREET	VITTORIA STREET TO WATSON STREET	BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE / CLAUGHTON	<b>C</b>	£84,126	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
PENSBY ROAD	GRANGE ROAD TO IRBY ROAD	HESWALL	<b>C</b>	£19,635	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
GRANGE ROAD	ASHBURTON ROAD TO ABBEY ROAD	WEST KIRBY & THURSTASTON	<b>C</b>	£40,320	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
ST HILARY BROW	ROUNDAABOUT AT BRECK ROAD TO CLAREMOUNT ROAD	LISCARD / WALLASEY		£38,640	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WALLASEY
HEATH ROAD	NORBURY AVENUE TO 104 HEATH ROAD	BEBINGTON	<b>C</b>	£78,330	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'C' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
BRIMSTAGE ROAD	OLD CLATTERBRIDGE ROAD TO BEECHWAY	CLATTERBRIDGE	<b>C</b>	£49,980	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
TELEGRAPH ROAD	ROCKY LANE TO BRIAR DRIVE	HESWALL		£58,191	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
NEW CHESTER ROAD	TORR DRIVE TO HEYGARTH ROAD	EASTHAM		£103,740	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
NEW CHESTER ROAD	JUNCTION AT EASTHAM RAKE	EASTHAM	<b>C</b>	£89,985	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH

ROAD NAME	LIMITS	WARD	OTHER PRIORITIES	ESTIMATE	WORKS DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION	CONSTITUENCY
NEW CHESTER ROAD	407 - 465 NEW CHESTER ROAD (HESKETH WAY)	EASTHAM		£61,446	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
BEDFORD ROAD / OLD CHESTER ROAD	JUNCTION	ROCK FERRY		£39,186	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
OLD GREASBY ROAD / ARROWE PARK ROAD	JUNCTION	UPTON		£49,350	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'C' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
BRIMSTAGE ROAD	TALBOT AVENUE TO ROSE COTTAGE ENTRANCE	CLATTERBRIDGE	<b>C</b>	£16,821	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
CLEVELAND STREET	RENDLE STREET TO HAMILTON SQUARE	BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE		£93,093	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
TOWN LANE	TO BE CONFIRMED	BEBINGTON		£70,000	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
PARK ROAD NORTH	DUKE STREET TO CONWAY STREET	BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE		£129,780	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
DUKE STREET	BECKWITH STREET TO CLEVELAND STREET	BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE		£75,600	HOT ROLLED ASPHALT	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
DOCK ROAD	HICKMANS ROAD TO GORSEY LANE	SEACOMBE		£16,826	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WALLASEY
BARNSTON ROAD	TELEGRAPH ROAD TO STORETON LANE	HESWALL / PENSBY & THINGWALL		£96,476	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH

ROAD NAME	LIMITS	WARD	OTHER PRIORITIES	ESTIMATE	WORKS DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION	CONSTITUENCY
BEAUFORT ROAD / CORPORATION ROAD	WALLASEY BRIDGE ROAD TO CAVENDISH STREET	BIDSTON & ST JAMES	C	£69,908	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
CLEVELAND STREET	DUKE STREET TO WATSON STREET	BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE		£33,242	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD
THORNTON COMMON ROAD	THE SOUTH LODGE TO WILLASTON ROAD	CLATTERBRIDGE	C	£44,712	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
HEATH ROAD	NORBURY AVENUE TO 104 HEATH ROAD	BEBINGTON	C	£11,322	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	NON PRINCIPAL 'C' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
GRANGE ROAD	ABBNEY ROAD TO BLACK HORSE HILL	WEST KIRBY & THURSTASTON	C	£12,479	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
WOODCHURCH ROAD	100 COMMON FIELD ROAD TO 6 COMMON FIELD ROAD	UPTON / PENSBY & THINGWALL		£37,064	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
PENSBY ROAD	IRBY ROAD TO DOWNHAM ROAD NORTH	HESWALL	C	£11,664	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	WIRRAL SOUTH
BIRKENHEAD ROAD	MILLHOUSE LANE TO BARN HEY CRESCENT	HOYLAKE & MEOLS		£63,675	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
SAUGHALL MASSIE ROAD	UPTON BYPASS TO PUMP LANE	MORETON WEST & SAUGHALL MASSIE		£66,141	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	NON PRINCIPAL 'C' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
MARKET STREET	THE KINGS GAP TO WOOD STREET	HOYLAKE & MEOLS	C	£15,111	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	PRINCIPAL 'A' ROAD	WIRRAL WEST
NEW CHESTER ROAD	STANLEY ROAD TO RAB AT ROCK FERRY BYPASS	BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE	C	£83,700	SURFACE DRESS AND LOCK CHIP	NON PRINCIPAL 'B' ROAD	BIRKENHEAD



**CLLR BERNIE MOONEY**

## **CABINET**

**Monday, 25 March 2019**

### **NEW MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **Councillor Bernie Mooney, Cabinet Member - Children & Families, said:**

“Safeguarding vulnerable children is our most enduring and important responsibility. The work of the Local Safeguarding Board has been vital for many years, often identifying areas where public agencies can work together better to protect children.

“These new arrangements will be equally important. They create a new system, where local authorities, Police and NHS colleagues formally work together to monitor the systems and practices in place to keep children safe.”

#### **REPORT SUMMARY**

Formed under the Children Act (2004) Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB's) are currently responsible for ensuring agencies effectively work together to safeguard children. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaces LSCB's with new local safeguarding arrangements, led by three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups). It also places a duty on child death review partners (local authorities and clinical commissioning groups) to review the deaths of children normally resident in the local area.

The three safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for the new local safeguarding arrangements.

The three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies whose involvement they consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in particular cases. They must also set out how their arrangements will receive independent scrutiny. Once agreed, the safeguarding partners must publish the arrangements.

The purpose of the local arrangements is to support and enable local agencies to work together in a system where:

- excellent practice is the norm
- partner agencies hold one another to account effectively
- there is early identification of 'new' safeguarding issues
- learning is promoted and embedded
- information is shared effectively
- the public can feel confident that children are protected from harm

The purpose of this report is to present the proposed model (detailed in Appendix One) for new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for consideration and approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- (1) That Cabinet approve the proposed model; and
- (2) That the model is published ahead of shadow implementation on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, with full implementation on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 (when the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board will be stood down).

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

- 1.1 To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act (2017) to have new published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place by September 2019.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 There were no other options. The three statutory safeguarding partners are required under the Children and Social Work Act to develop new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The model itself went through many iterations and refinements in its development journey to the final model presented to Cabinet.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Changes to local safeguarding arrangements stem from the 'Wood Review' of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, published in May 2016. The review made 34 recommendations, the chief of which – accepted by the Government – was the proposal to replace the existing statutory framework for LSCBs with a new statutory framework for multi-agency arrangements.

- 3.2 The review recommended:

- a requirement for all areas to move towards new multi-agency arrangements;
- to require the three statutory agencies (clinical commissioning group, police and local authorities) to design multi-agency arrangements for protecting children, and to work together on key strategic issues;
- to place an expectation on schools and other relevant agencies involved in the protection of children to co-operate with the new multi-agency arrangements;
- to end the existing system of serious case reviews, and replace it with new national learning framework overseen by a new independent body;
- to transfer national oversight of Child Death Overview Panels from the Department for Education to the Department of Health.

- 3.3 The implementation of the agreed changes required new legislation and this was introduced through the Children and Social Work Act (2017). The Act aims to:

- improve support for looked after children in England and Wales especially for those leaving care
- enable better learning about effective approaches to child protection and care in England
- establish a new regulatory regime for the social work profession in England

- 3.4 Under the Act the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies whose involvement they consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in particular cases. They must also set out how their arrangements will receive independent scrutiny. Once agreed, the safeguarding partners must publish the arrangements. The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local agencies to work together in a system where:

- excellent practice is the norm
- partner agencies hold one another to account effectively
- there is early identification of 'new' safeguarding issues
- learning is promoted and embedded
- information is shared effectively
- the public can feel confident that children are protected from harm

3.5 The new local arrangements must ensure:

- children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families
- In order to work together effectively, the safeguarding partners with other local organisations and agencies should develop processes that:
  - facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries
  - ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families

3.6 The safeguarding partners have designed a proposed model for the new safeguarding arrangements (appendix one) which is compliant with the Children and Social Work Act (2017). Independent scrutiny of the arrangements is a key feature of the model.

#### Timeline

3.7 The partners propose that the model is published on the 31<sup>st</sup> March and introduced in shadow form from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. The model will be fully implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. The Wirral safeguarding Children Board will be stood down as the statutory body at the same time.

3.8 The transitional guidance published by the Department for Education requires safeguarding partners to publish their new arrangements by 29 June 2019 and have the arrangements fully in place by the 29 September 2019. Statutory arrangements are in place to complete any outstanding case or child death reviews.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no additional financial implications for the local authority as it previously significantly contributed to the funding and resourcing of the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board. The contribution from the Local Authority to the new arrangements is commensurate with its current contribution to the WSCB.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Local Authority, the Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group and Merseyside Police have a legal duty under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to have multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place by September 2019.
- 5.2 The safeguarding arrangements must be compliant with the statutory guidance published in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

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

- 6.1 Resourcing for the new safeguarding model will be provided by the three statutory partners. Funding and business support is in place from existing resources.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The safeguarding partners are required to have multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place by September 2019. Any delay in implementation beyond this date would leave the Local Authority and partners in default of requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Regular multi-agency partnership consultation took place with the statutory members of the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board during development of the model. Consultation was extended to young people, families, professionals and the wider community during December 2018 and January 2019. Feedback from the consultations informed the final model.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality at this stage.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** *David Robbins*  
*Business Manager*  
*Wirral Safeguarding Children Board*  
telephone: (0151 6664314)  
email: [davidrobbins@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:davidrobbins@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix One - Proposed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Children and Social Work Act (2017) can be viewed here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) Statutory Guidance (including transitional guidance) can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
None	

# Wirral Safeguarding Partnership

## Appendix One

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## Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements

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# Section 1

## Introduction and Background

Page 51



1.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaces Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with new local safeguarding arrangements, led by three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups). It also places a duty on child death review partners (local authorities and clinical commissioning groups) to review the deaths of children normally resident in the local area - or if they consider it appropriate, for those not normally resident in the area.

1.2 The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* provides the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and a clear framework for the three local safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for an area within the local authority area) to make arrangements to work together to identify and respond to the needs of local children. This Executive function in the Wirral arrangements is led by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners Executive group illustrated in the model diagram on page 22

1.3 *Working Together (2018)* sets out the duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, on local organisations and agencies who deliver services to children to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions. Responsibility for ensuring effective arrangements in place lies with the three safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

1.4 The three safeguarding partners are required to agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in

supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

1.5 To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies. Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with regard to local need.

1.6 The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- excellent practice is the norm
- partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families



1.7 In order to work together effectively, the safeguarding partners with other local organisations and agencies should develop processes that:

- facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries
- ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families

1.8 This document sets out how the three safeguarding partners in Wirral will work together and with other agencies to ensure all children in Wirral are safeguarded. The published arrangements for Wirral include:

- arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area
- arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews
- arrangements for independent scrutiny to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Wirral including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny will be part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.
- who the three local safeguarding partners are
- the geographical boundary the arrangements will apply to

- the relevant agencies the safeguarding partners will work with; why these organisations and agencies have been chosen; and how they will collaborate and work together to improve outcomes for children and families
- how all early years settings, schools (including independent schools, academies and free schools) and other educational establishments will be included in the safeguarding arrangements as relevant agencies
- how residential homes for children will be included in the safeguarding arrangements as relevant agencies
- how the safeguarding partners will use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help
- how inter-agency training will be commissioned, delivered and monitored for impact and how they will undertake any multiagency and interagency audits
- how the arrangements will be funded
- the process for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews, setting out the arrangements for governance and how learning is embedded across organisations and agencies
- arrangements and relationships with the Health and Wellbeing Board and emerging children's partnerships
- arrangements for the review of child deaths
- how the arrangements will include the voice of children and families
- how the threshold document setting out the local criteria for action aligns with the arrangements



# Section 2

## Multi-agency

## Safeguarding

## Arrangements

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## The Safeguarding Partners

2.1 Working Together details the replacement of LCSBs with local safeguarding partners who have the responsibility of creating new flexible local safeguarding arrangements. The three statutory safeguarding partners in Wirral are:

- Wirral Local Authority
- Merseyside Police
- Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group

2.2 The three partners will be represented by:

- Paul Boyce, the Corporate Director for Children – Wirral Local Authority
- Detective Chief Inspector Rachel Wilson – Merseyside Police
- Lorna Quigley, Director of Quality and Safety – NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group

The steps are empowered to speak with authority for their organisation.

2.3 The three safeguarding partners have agreed to assume equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements. In situations that require a clear, single point of leadership, for example where a single named person is required the three safeguarding partners have agreed that the Corporate Director for Children will have the overview on issues including implementation and compliance.

2.4 The three safeguarding partners are committed to providing a safeguarding system in Wirral where it can be proven and assurance can be given that:

- excellent practice is the norm, and can be seen in common across services
- partner agencies hold one another to account effectively, and improvement results
- there is early identification of, and co-owned action on 'new' safeguarding issues
- learning is promoted and embedded, and its effects can be proven
- information is shared effectively and translates into knowledge that informs practice
- the public are engaged in safeguarding all children and feel confident that children are protected from harm

2.5 The safeguarding system will include approaches to the following:

- The earliest possible intervention that ensures most children are never in danger or in need of extra help and support
- arrangements to ensure children in need of help and protection receive the right help at the right time
- a model and methodology for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews, including reviews which identify and disseminate excellent practice
- continued development and evaluation of the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) model for working with children and families where more intensive interventions, including Early Help are needed
- arrangements for monitoring, scrutinising and challenging partnership compliance with safeguarding standards – including auditing, Section 11/175, using performance data, case studies exemplifying excellence and a means of challenging practice so as to improve it



2.6 The safeguarding system will be underpinned by agreed multi-agency values as behaviours as set out in **Appendix Three**. These will regularly be revisited and examined in practice.

2.7 In exceptional circumstances where there is failure to reach agreement and all other avenues of resolution has been explored, following discussion at the Executive Group or where those providing independent scrutiny consider that the leadership arrangements are weak or malfunctioning escalation will be to the Chief Executive of the Local Authority who will determine actions to be taken following consultation with the Accountable Officer Wirral Health and Care Commissioning and the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police.

## Geographical Area

2.8 The geographical extent of the arrangements comprises the footprint of the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral (shown in the map below).



Wirral (red) show within Merseyside (white)



In the eastern part of the borough, particularly in the built up towns in parts of Wallasey and Birkenhead along the river Mersey, there are high levels of poverty which impact upon children's lives and their development. Approximately 22% of children in Wirral live near or below the poverty line (i.e. living in families with income below 60% of the UK median).

2.9 The population of Wirral is 320,200 including approximately 70,500 children and young people (0-18). The population is predominantly white British (93%) but significant ethnic minority groups exists, particularly Irish, Chinese and Polish.

2.10 The local authority boundary is co-terminus with the footprint of the Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group. The local police force covers the larger area of the ceremonial county of Merseyside, comprised of the five boroughs of Wirral, Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens.

## Pan-regional Collaboration

2.11 New safeguarding children partnerships have been developing plans that will facilitate a smooth transition into the new safeguarding arrangements. There will continue to be a commitment to deliver plans locally, however following consultation across the region it was agreed that there are areas of business where we could perform more effectively and efficiently across the Merseyside region if partnerships work together in a more joined up way, which will assist us to deliver our key priority of safeguarding and protecting children. The areas of business where we will collaborate on are policy and strategy, workforce development and communication.

Agreement is in place to collaborate on the following work streams:

- Child Death Review arrangements, based upon the current Merseyside CDOP
- Safeguarding Policy and Strategy - pan Merseyside documents exist in a

number of areas for example Merseyside has a single Exploitation protocol and Missing procedure.

- Workforce Development
- Communication

2.12 As well as pan-Merseyside collaboration the safeguarding partners in Wirral will also pursue other mutually beneficial local and regional arrangements, for example safeguarding training and learning events.

## Relevant Agencies

2.13 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility both across society and in any service or setting serving children, families and communities. Strong effective multi-agency arrangements are responsive to local circumstances, and engage the right people. For local arrangements to be effective, they must reflect local needs and engage agencies who can provide targeted support to children and families.

2.14 The list of relevant agencies in Wirral reflects both the published statutory instrument *The Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018*, current LSCB membership – established to reflect local need; agencies which provide a statutory service or are locally commissioned; agencies which support Early Help services; and agencies which locally support children in need of help and protection. Where agencies provide specific support for an identified vulnerable cohort of children in Wirral, young carers for example, they are also included as relevant agencies.



2.15 The three safeguarding partners in Wirral following consultation with the outgoing Wirral Safeguarding Children Board, have agreed which local relevant agencies they must engage in order to ensure effective local arrangements. The list of Wirral relevant agencies is included at **Appendix Four**.

2.16 Each relevant agency has been provided with details of their ongoing responsibilities and the expectations placed on them by the new arrangements in Wirral. The local arrangements in Wirral have been developed in consultation with as wide a breadth of partner agencies as possible and the arrangements now adopted reflect their commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people.

2.17 The safeguarding partners expect relevant agencies to co-operate with them in the same way as agencies have been co-operating with the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board since its inception.

2.18 The partners reserve the right to include any other agencies as relevant agencies and add them to the published list at any time.

## Early Years, Schools, Colleges and other Educational Establishments

2.19 All schools, colleges and other educational providers have clear duties in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and have a pivotal role to play in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. Their co-operation and buy-in to the new arrangements is vital for success. All schools and colleges will be relevant agencies in the new arrangements.

2.20 Under the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) arrangements there has been very strong education participation and representation at the Board and in its sub committees, including representation by serving head teachers and teachers on various committees. The safeguarding partners are seeking to retain this commitment under the new arrangements and as such have retained education sector representation in key committees and activities.

2.21 Wirral sees the establishment and maintenance of a strong education economy as central not only to safeguarding arrangements but also to maximising outcomes and life chances for all children in Wirral. To help achieve this the safeguarding partners will ensure that the education economy is fully integrated in all aspects of local safeguarding arrangements.

## Residential Homes and Domiciliary Care Providers

2.22 Organisations providing residential or home care services to children and young people have responsibilities to safeguard them and promote their welfare, and will be relevant agencies in the new arrangements in Wirral. Oversight of the quality of provision, including safeguarding arrangements is provided in the following ways:

- participation in the annual Section 11 safeguarding audit process
- ensuring all settings have processes in place, compliant with relevant statutory guidance, for safeguarding children including reporting mechanisms
- ensuring and testing adherence to and compliance with safeguarding policies, procedures and standards published by the safeguarding

partners, particularly but not limited to procedures related to children who go missing, and clear actions taken to avoid the criminalisation of children in care

- oversight of quality and safety by the Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Authority commissioning arrangements
- engagement by the partners with the local providers forum

## Supporting Families Enhancing Futures

2.23 The Wirral Safeguarding Children Board has developed a single framework for working with children and families across the continuum of need. Called Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) and developed in a multi-agency way in partnership with Professor Jan Horwath from the University of Sheffield, the model draws from strengthening families approaches and is centred on understanding and responding to the child's and family's daily lived experience.

2.24 SFEF was launched in October 2017, initially being introduced for cases managed under frameworks for Child Protection, Child in Need and Team Around the Family. The model is also being applied to reviews for children looked after.

2.25 The Safeguarding Partners have now agreed that the SFEF approach to working with families will form a central plank of all their safeguarding arrangements and will provide a vehicle for both delivering positive outcomes to children and families and for ensuring a consistent and high quality approach to multi-agency safeguarding practice.



The SFEF model is underpinned by five principles:

- A Child Centred Approach Understanding the World of the Child
- Understanding the World of the Parents
- Recognising families Strengths as well as Concerns
- Engaging parents in the change process
- Measuring change for the better

Detail about these principles is provided at **Appendix Five**

2.26 Responsibility for overseeing implementation and ongoing evaluation of the model sits with the multi-agency SFEF steering group. The group is chaired by the LA’s Head of Safeguarding and includes representatives from the health economy, police, and children’s services. The steering group is responsible for publishing procedures, practice guidance and resources for SFEF and ensuring the provision of multi-agency training. The group is maintained in the new partnership arrangements and reports progress to the Executive Group. The group also has a focus on evidencing improved outcomes for children and ensuring the thresholds of need support appropriate step up and step down of children appropriate to levels of need and risk. Expansion of the use of SFEF across a wider range of services will proceed under the new arrangements.

## Contextual Safeguarding

2.27 The safeguarding arrangements include a framework for understanding Contextual Safeguarding as a model for identifying and responding to significant harm and risks posed to young people from beyond their family. The approach fits with the SFEF model, especially its consideration of the

lived experience of the child or young person, including all risks to them presented both within and outside of the family home.

## Business Intelligence and QA Function

2.28 The safeguarding model developed by the partners (illustrated on page 22) includes a business intelligence unit. This unit, involving input and participation from across the partnership and supported by the current WSCB business support team is responsible for providing and analysing data and intelligence for the partners to use to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the help provided to children, young people and families.

2.29 The business intelligence function will include a range of activity including:

- managing the annual Section 11 and Section 175 (Education) individual agency safeguarding audits
- planning and undertaking the programme of multi-agency safeguarding audits
- collecting and analysing multi-agency performance information and data
- triangulating information with the voice of children, young people and families, and frontline practitioners
- overseeing the annual programme of frontline visits from partner agencies
- co-ordinating annual peer reviews
- co-ordinating case review activity
- undertaking learning reviews and audits as directed by the safeguarding partners
- co-ordinating the multi-agency and single agency training function
- ensuring local safeguarding policies and procedures are in place



## Multi-agency Safeguarding Training

2.30 The safeguarding partners will continue to provide a programme of multi-agency training in line with that previously provided by the WSCB. The partners will maintain a multi-agency training pool of professionals with particular expertise and knowledge drawn from across the partnership. Co-ordination of the training provision sits within the Business Intelligence Unit. The Unit will provide:

- a multi-agency programme of safeguarding training including sessions for Working Together; Supporting Families Enhancing Futures; Child Exploitation; Neglect and Domestic Abuse
- briefings and updates including 60 minute safeguarding spotlight sessions on issues and themes identified nationally and locally
- published seven minute briefings to support professional practice in all services
- a comprehensive training evaluation strategy including feedback 'on the day', a measure of the impact of training 3 months after attendance, and multi-agency focus groups six months after attendance to inform development of future training
- direct commissioning of training only when training cannot be provided through the partnership training pool
- A single agency training offer to schools and colleges
- A basis awareness safeguarding training offer to relevant agencies



## Commissioning of Services

2.31 The safeguarding partners have a role to play in commissioning successful and appropriate arrangements for children. The partners do not commission services directly but will influence commissioning intentions by having a clear understanding of the collective needs of local children. This will be informed through the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis. The safeguarding partners will use this to help them understand the prevalence and contexts of need, including specific needs relating to disabled children, those with special educational needs and those relating to abuse and neglect. This knowledge in turn will help shape services. The partners will ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a primary consideration in all commissioning arrangements, including, for example bids into external funds such as those from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

2.32 Commissioning decisions will continue to be informed by the voices, views, opinions and wishes of children and young people.

2.33 In May 2018 an alignment of commissioning functions between the Local Authority and Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group was formally agreed through a Section 75 agreement. The commissioning organisation is known as Wirral Health and Care Commissioning, and governance is managed through the Joint Strategic Commissioning Board. The aim of the arrangement is to reduce duplication and streamline commissioning pathways across Wirral to improve the health and care of Wirral's population. In order to achieve this aim joint commissioning intentions are being developed in relation to:

- Abuse and Exploitation of children
- Domestic Abuse
- 0-19 yrs Health and Wellbeing Service
- Mental Health Services
- Sexual Health Services
- Paediatric Services
- Youth Justice Services

## Case Reviews, Auditing and Learning

2.34 The safeguarding arrangements will be centred on the partnership as a learning organisation. This will include a continued focus on and understanding of multi-agency frontline practice which informs effective leadership and provision of services. To support this the safeguarding partners and members will:

- agree and publish minimum standards of practice and test and report compliance with them by all relevant agencies and statutory bodies
- quality assure and audit standards of practice
- provide a comprehensive training/ briefing offer including 7 minute and 60 minute briefings and learning sessions
- host an annual safeguarding learning conference
- undertake bi-annual frontline visits and encourage shadowing and shared learning
- undertake statutory case reviews and local learning reviews to aid and improve learning

2.35 Working Together 2018 sets out arrangements for new local and national safeguarding practice reviews which are replacing the current system of undertaking serious case reviews. The main changes defined in the statutory guidance are:

- Replacement of the current National Panel for SCR's with a Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel
- Introduction of two levels of review - Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (commissioned locally), and National Child Safeguarding Practice Review (commissioned nationally)



- Duty on Local Authorities to notify incidents to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel
- Undertaking of 15 day rapid reviews for cases referred to the new panel

The process for Case Reviews is set out in the partners Learning and Improvement framework which can be accessed here:

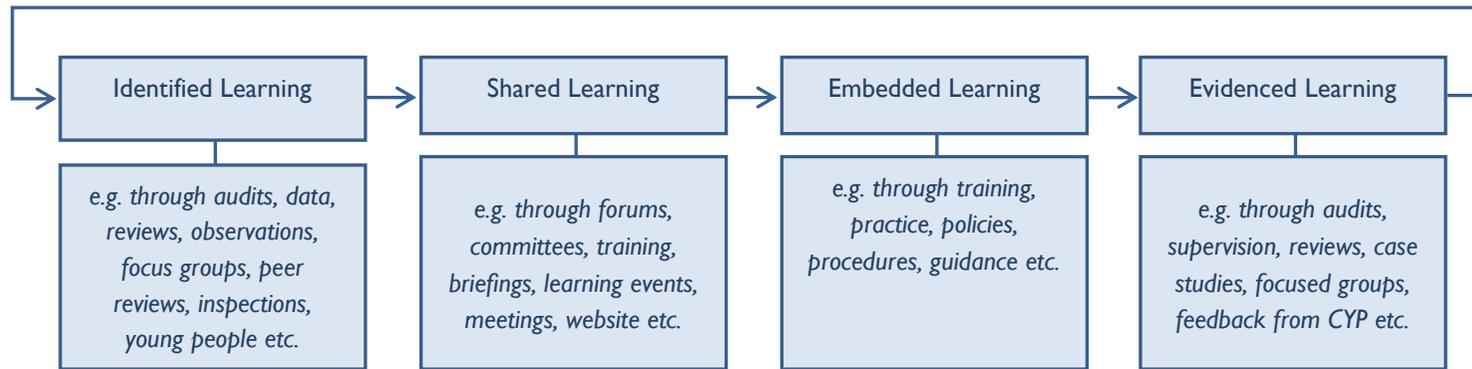
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/learning-and-improvement/>

2.36 The Wirral Safeguarding Children Board currently has a multi-agency case review committee. It oversees notifications to the national panel, commissioning and oversight of SCR's and commissioning of local multi-agency reviews (below the SCR threshold). The committee also maintains oversight of single agency reviews of cases, and the learning and actions arising.

2.37 This committee will be retained in the new model by the safeguarding partners with updated terms of reference to reflect the changes to the case review process set out in Working Together 2018. The committee has also already published an updated learning and improvement framework and updated the information and guidance on the safeguarding website.

2.38 Membership of the committee already includes representatives of the three statutory partner agencies and representatives from the wider health and education economies. The current membership of the committee will be retained by the safeguarding partners and will be subject to regular review. The ability of the committee and the partnership to call in other agencies as required will also continue.

2.39 The safeguarding partners in Wirral are collaborating with the safeguarding partners across Merseyside to agree an approach to local reviews. This includes use of a systems methodology, identifying authors and



commissioning of reviews (a list of approved authors is retained regionally), aligned templates and paperwork, training and the sharing of findings and learning.

2.40 The new safeguarding partnership will be a learning organisation. The new model will promote this at all times from the first identification of learning through to ensuring learning has become embedded in practice and led to positive outcomes. This is illustrated in the diagram above.

2.41 The safeguarding partners have inherited a strong, well established model of multi-agency auditing from the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board, supported by wide multi-agency participation. The partners are building on this strong foundation to develop the wider business intelligence part of the new model with prime responsibility for overseeing all audit, performance and data activity. The Business Unit will oversee all learning activity i.e. all the learning, training, audit, case review and performance activity undertaken by the partners which informs them about the strength of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Activity in the Business Unit will include input from statutory and relevant agencies' frontline professionals, operational and strategic managers. It will be informed by participation and feedback from children, young people, families and the wider public.



2.42 The continual and varied auditing element of the model (detailed in the full model diagram on page 22) includes:

- multi-agency auditing (thematic and in response to findings, emerging issues or identified weaknesses in the multi-agency safeguarding system)
- thematic auditing and deep dives led by frontline practitioners
- activity informed by focus groups of professionals, children, young people and family members
- scrutiny of findings from single agency audits, and the widest possible dissemination of findings and learning
- ongoing themed and partitioned Section 11 and Section 175 auditing (with approach and findings shared pan Merseyside)

2.43 Under the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board multi-agency audit activity was led by its Performance Committee. Under the new arrangements a multi-partner annual audit plan will be developed and agreed at the start of the year and will include activity on a local, a pan-Merseyside and a Cheshire and Merseyside basis. This will be centrally coordinated by the Business Unit.

2.44 The Business Unit holds responsibility for ensuring learning is identified and disseminated as quickly as possible through a variety of means, including

informing training, briefings, policies and procedures, and for testing and evidencing the impact of learning on constantly improving practice and outcomes. The contribution and participation of professionals in the work of the business intelligence unit is key to understanding and improving practice. Partner agencies will be expected to show a clear commitment to its work.

2.45 As well as audit activity, the learning hub will receive findings from case reviews and will collect performance information and data from partner agencies. The Business Unit will provide the safeguarding partners, through the Executive Group with information to support an assessment of the strength of multi-agency and single agency arrangements to safeguard children.

## Child Death Reviews

2.46 The Child Death Review statutory guidance gives clinical commissioning groups and local authorities joint responsibility for child death reviews, and enables a wider geographical footprint for these partnerships in order for them to gain a better understanding of the causes of child deaths.

2.47 Working Together (2018) states that the geographical footprint for child death partners should be able to review at least 60 deaths per year.

2.48 In making arrangements to review child deaths, child death review partners should establish a structure and process to review all deaths of children normally resident in their area and, if appropriate and agreed between child death review partners, the deaths of children not normally resident in their area but who have died there.

2.49 The Child Death partners in Wirral, in agreement with partners in the other boroughs of Merseyside have modelled their child death review structures and processes on their current Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) framework. In Merseyside successful pan-Merseyside CDOP arrangements have been in place for several years. The CDOP process is published in a separate document.

2.50 As is the case at present Liverpool Local Authority and CCG will assume lead responsibility.

2.51 CDOP reports will be reported into the new arrangements and the Wirral Health and Wellbeing board. Initial governance will be provided by the new safeguarding arrangements. Any cases highlighting safeguarding concerns will be shared with the safeguarding partners. An overview of child death safeguarding patterns and trends will be included in the safeguarding partner's annual report.

## Voices of Children, Families and Professionals

2.52 The safeguarding model in Wirral includes mechanisms for gaining feedback from children, young people and families, and from frontline professionals. This feedback is an essential part of the intelligence gathered by the partners to both test the quality of safeguarding arrangements and also to inform commissioning arrangements. The local mechanisms currently in place which will be utilised and developed by the partners include:

- feedback from Early Help, CiN, CP and CLA processes including the Children in Care Council
- the well-developed LA framework for youth participation including the Youth Voice Group
- WSCB audit framework including feedback from families and professionals



- WSCB frontline practitioners group
- ongoing SFEF evaluation process
- presentations and meetings between young people and the WSCB
- feedback mechanisms in partner agencies, for example Catch22 robustly gather feedback from children and young people who regularly go missing.

2.53 Consultation with children, families and professionals formed a very important part of the development of this local model by the safeguarding partners. Their arrangements will remain open to public scrutiny, and to ongoing scrutiny via the Council's processes, those in partner agencies, governance bodies, the Partnerships web presence and publications.

## Threshold Document

2.54 The safeguarding partners publish a transparent, accessible and easily understood threshold document which sets out the local criteria for action, including:

- the process for the early help assessment (EHAT) and the type and level of early help services to be provided
- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under:
- section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need)
- section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm)

- section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (care and supervision orders)
- section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a child)
- clear procedures and processes for cases relating to:
- the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children
- children managed within the youth secure estate
- disabled children

The partners' threshold document is published on the website: [www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk](http://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk). It contributes significantly to proven improvements in practice and in shared responsibilities across agencies and partners.

## Relationships with other Influential Bodies

2.55 The effectiveness of the new arrangements is reliant on the strength of its relationships with other influential bodies and boards to ensure a consistent partnership approach to safeguarding arrangements. The role of the safeguarding partners is to ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a theme which runs through all influential group activity, rather than periodically being a separate agenda item. The partners will help influence the children's safeguarding agenda across a variety of groups and ensure all partners are held to account for the effectiveness of their safeguarding arrangements.

2.56 The partners have agreed memorandums of understanding with the following groups to ensure a direct line of communication, challenge and accountability exists:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Merseyside Criminal Justice Board



- Corporate Parenting Board
- Wirral Community Safety Partnership (Safer Wirral)
- Wirral Partnership Board
- Wirral Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Pan-Merseyside Safeguarding Adults Board
- Merseyside Protecting Vulnerable Peoples forum
- WHACC Joint Strategic Commissioning Board

## Independent Scrutiny and Annual Reporting

2.57 In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners will publish an annual report each summer, and will hold an annual learning/ best practice multi-agency event. The report will cover the period of the previous financial year. The report will set out what the partners in Wirral have done as a result of the arrangements, including through child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. In addition, the report will include:

- evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities, and suggested ways forward to improve matters
- a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of

any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements

- ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from each other and from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision

2.58 The safeguarding partners will ensure the partnerships work to co-ordinate multi-agency activity to safeguard children is as transparent and open as possible. This will include the safeguarding partners continuing to publish messages, good practice, case studies and safeguarding activity on its website, through newsletters and through its social media channels. This will regularly be reviewed to ensure maximum coverage of activity.

2.59 As per Working Together 2018 the Wirral safeguarding model includes an independent scrutiny function. The independent scrutiny function will provide critical challenge and appraisal of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Wirral.

2.60 The role of independent scrutiny will be to:

- Assess how well organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to hold each other to account for effective safeguarding
- Contribute to the content of the partnership's annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, their performance and the effectiveness of local services
- Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families including early help
- Assess whether the three statutory safeguarding partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations



- Scrutinise the quality assurance activity (including multi-agency case file auditing and processes for identifying lessons to be learned)
- Scrutinise the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Assess the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Wirral
- Provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the extent to which partner agencies are fulfilling their statutory duties to keep children safe
- Evaluate arrangements for the operation of the safeguarding partnership and attend a range of meetings and activities
- Support the implementation of findings and outcomes from safeguarding reviews

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Assess whether effective performance management, audit and quality assurance mechanisms are in place within partner organisations which will support the three safeguarding partners to fulfil their statutory objectives, and which will enable the partnership to identify and measure its success and impact

- Ensure that the voices of children, young people and their families are appropriately represented and heard in the work of the partnership.
- Publish an annual scrutiny report and advise the partners about any deficiencies in the multi-agency arrangements and strategies to improve the arrangements

2.61 The safeguarding partners will determine local arrangements and the independent scrutiny will:



- Provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of services to safeguard children
- Support a learning culture and environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge

2.62 The Independent Scrutiny function will be provided by an independent person appointed by the safeguarding partners. The independent person will also lead the safeguarding partnership group events.

2.63 The safeguarding partners also maintain a protocol with the Local Authority's Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee/

## Escalation and Whistleblowing

2.64 All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported and know how to appropriately escalate and resolve intra-agency and inter-agency concerns and challenges about a child or young person's wellbeing and the response to their safeguarding needs. The partners have developed and published clear procedures for both multi-agency escalation and whistleblowing which are available on the [www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk](http://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk) website. The partners actively promote the publication and use of the procedures and expect all partners and relevant agencies to support their staff to do so.

## Dispute Resolution

2.65 The three safeguarding partners will aim to resolve any disagreements between them at the Executive meetings. Advice will be sought from the independent person providing scrutiny to aid in any resolution. Where disagreements remain escalation will be made to the Chief Executive of the

Local Authority who will determine actions to be taken following consultation with the Accountable Officer Wirral Health and Care Commissioning and the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police.

## Transitional Arrangements and Timeline

2.66 Transitional arrangements are in place in Wirral as per the published statutory guidance from the Department for Education. The current Wirral Safeguarding Children Board will continue as the statutory body overseeing safeguarding arrangements, including the commissioning and oversight of Serious Case Reviews until the new safeguarding arrangements come into force.

### Timeline

2.67 The partners have published a local transitioning plan which includes introducing new shadow arrangements on the **1<sup>st</sup> April 2019** ahead of the new arrangements being fully in place on the **1st September 2019**. The WSCB will stand down at the same time.

2.68 Following the new arrangements coming into force the safeguarding partners will adhere to the published timescales for previously commissioned serious case reviews and child death reviews to be completed.

2.69 The safeguarding partners will assume all the current multi-agency policies, procedures and guidance published by the WSCB. All of these will remain in force until such time as each is revised and updated. This will provide reassurance to partners that all current procedures will remain unchanged at the time of the transition.

2.70 The WSCB website will also transfer completely to the safeguarding

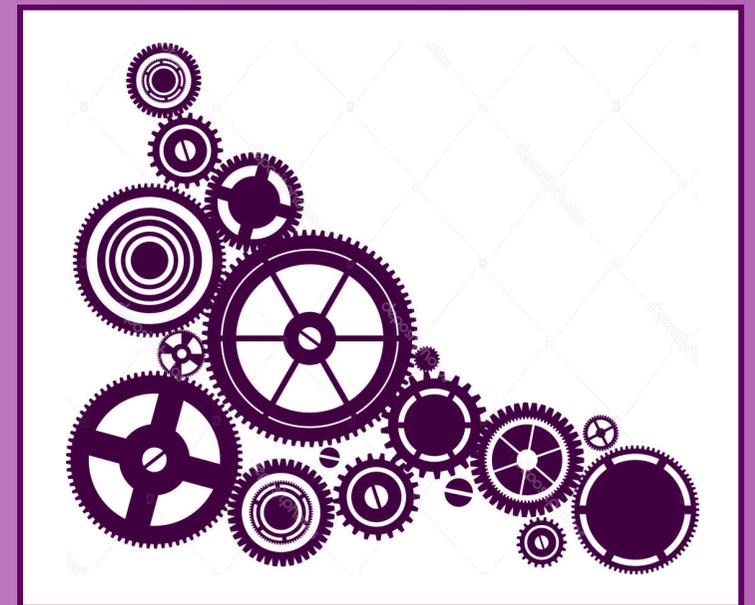
partners at the time of transition and all the information and guidance on the website will remain valid.



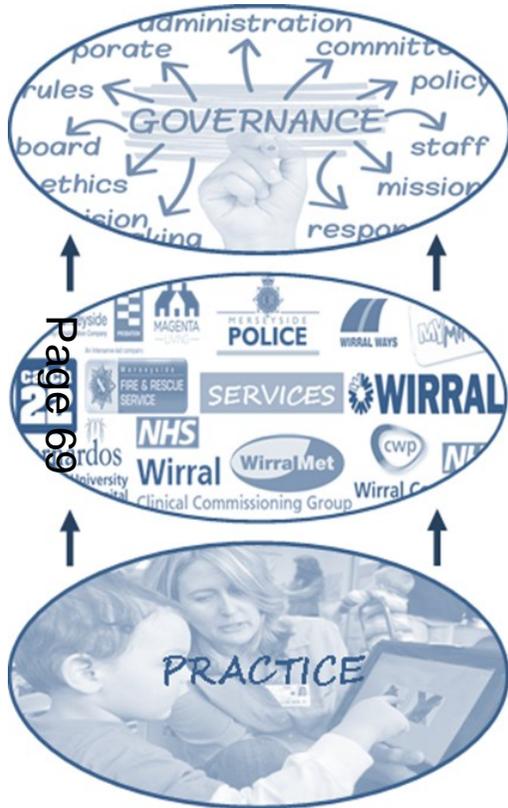
# Section 3

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# The Safeguarding Model



3.1 The safeguarding partners have agreed that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Wirral will be based on the solid foundation of effective practice. Multi-agency practice will in turn inform the commissioning and structure of services. Governance arrangements will support the assurance of effective arrangements. This three part model is simply illustrated below:



### Governance

Governance arrangements define the structure of the safeguarding model and have been developed to support the delivery of exemplary safeguarding practice in a learning culture under effective safeguarding arrangements.

### Services

Strong partnership arrangements with the right services are crucial to the success of the model. This includes how we best commission and arrange services to ensure positive outcomes for children.

### Practice

Developing excellent practice will be the basis of the model. SFEF sits at the centre of the Wirral approach to working with families under a consistent framework supported by shared values and behaviours (Appendix One).

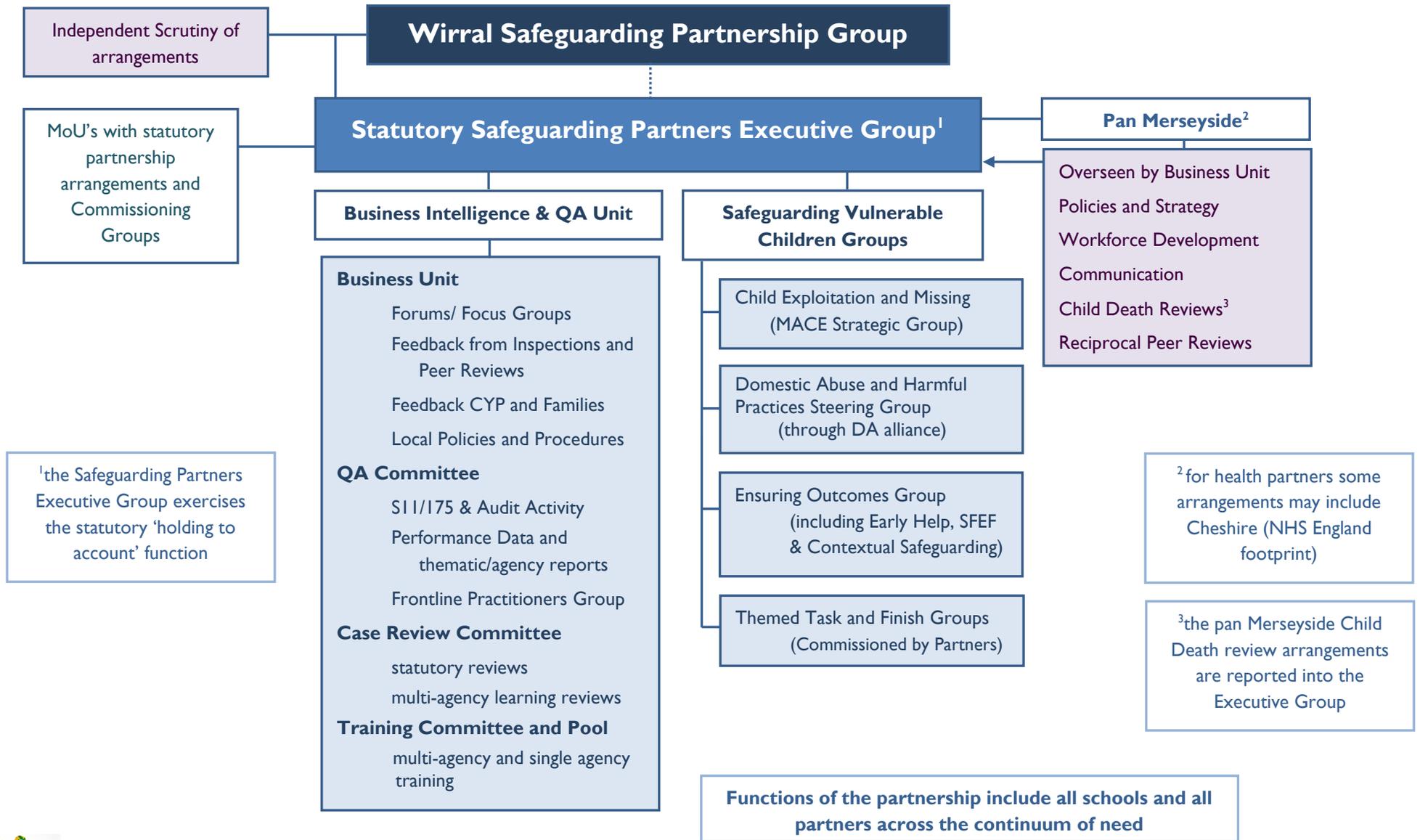
3.2 The model includes a Business Unit to ensure feedback and views from multi-agency frontline professionals, children, young people and families will be routinely collected and analysed to provide a measure of the quality of practice alongside more traditional data, review and auditing approaches. The model will utilise, wherever possible, high tech approaches to identifying themes, trends and patterns and emerging areas of concern. The model will stress the importance of regular supervision for all professionals in all services and at all stages of learning.

3.3 The model retains a traditional committee approach to governance and to retaining oversight of multi-agency safeguarding activity but differs from the previous LSCB model by having fewer 'permanent' committees and more flexible task and finish activity. The multi-agency partnership group is entirely separated from operational activity and performs the duties of a stakeholders group who receive a transparent assessment about the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements from the Executive Group. An illustration of the Wirral safeguarding model is provided overleaf.



### 3.4 Structure of the Wirral Safeguarding Model

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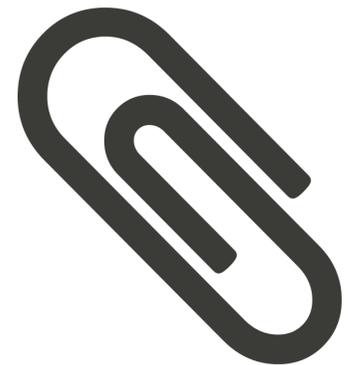
3.5 The function of each of the groups illustrated in page 22 is outlined below. Further detail including individual terms of reference and membership is published in the safeguarding partners Operating Framework document available on the website: <https://www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/>.



# Section 4

# Appendices

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## Appendix One - Purpose and Function of the Safeguarding Partnership

### Objectives

The core objectives of the partnership:

- To co-ordinate safeguarding services and work by relevant agencies to safeguard children and to promote their welfare; and
- To ensure that what is done is effective.

### Purpose

The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families



### Function

The functions of the partnership are to:

- develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Wirral;
- raise awareness in Wirral of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and to provide advice and guidance as to how this can be achieved;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by all relevant agencies, individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – and to advise them on ways to improve
- participate in the local planning and commissioning of services for children in Wirral and to ensure that they take safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into account
- undertake statutory case reviews and local learning reviews
- provide multi-agency safeguarding training and learning opportunities
- understand and assess the effectiveness of frontline multi-agency practice

A key aim of the work of the partnership is to promote high standards of safeguarding work and to foster a culture of continuous improvement. Through its work the partnership will identify and act on identified weaknesses in services. It will aim to avoid unnecessary duplication of work. The partnership should ensure that its monitoring role complements and contributes to the work of other influential groups including the health and wellbeing board, which in turn will devote a larger share of its business on the behalf of children and young people.

## Appendix Two - Safeguarding Partnership Group

### Job Purpose

To be responsible to the statutory safeguarding partners and share responsibility with other members of the partnership to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, in accordance with government legislation and guidance.

### Objectives

- To ensure there is an effective means of communication about the work of the partnership within each agency
- To ensure that the partnership is adequately resourced
- To provide the partnership with management information so that the partners can ensure the effectiveness of inter-agency safeguarding work
- To develop and evaluate the impact of inter-agency safeguarding procedures, practice guidance and protocols
- To develop and evaluate the impact of inter-agency training in safeguarding and child protection
- To contribute to the development of the work of the partnership

### Person Specification

Safeguarding partnership group members should have a senior strategic role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their own organisation.



Members should be able to:

- Speak for their organisation with authority and wherever possible delegated authority
- Commit their organisation on policy and practice matters, including expenditure in relation to board activity without recourse to higher authority
- Hold their organisation to account on behalf of the statutory partners

Where members are representing educational establishments, independent health care organisations, voluntary, community or faith sector organisations, members should be able to:

- Communicate formally with other similar organisations about the work of the partnership
- Champion safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people informally both in their own establishment and in their contact with other similar establishments or organisations

Partnership Board members should hold a current satisfactory enhanced DBS check, which should be reviewed at intervals of no less than 3 years.

### Responsibilities of individual partnership board members

- To be accountable to the statutory safeguarding partners in respect of the work of the Group
- To ensure that agency contributions, both financial and 'in kind', are sufficient to enable the partnership to function effectively
- To attend and contribute to all Group meetings and events
- To exercise the right to challenge
- To co-ordinate the timely dissemination of information within own agency, and to consult agency staff on pertinent issues

- To represent own agency's views with authority
- To promote good safeguarding practice within own agency and to monitor and evaluate their compliance with partnership policies and procedures
- To be aware of, and bring to the attention of the safeguarding partners, any national or local developments or any changes to agency requirements which might impact on the delivery of services
- To prepare adequately for meetings, by reading minutes and associated papers and to contribute to debate, recommendations for actions and decisions
- To complete any actions within agreed timescales
- To accept shared responsibility for the development and satisfactory completion of the partnership Annual Report, and for the development of safeguarding policies and procedures both for the partnership and own agency
- To attend at least one multi-agency training session every year
- To report to a senior accountable person within own organisation on the organisations performance in relation to safeguarding partnership activities
- To ensure their own agency complies with policies, procedures and published standards, and participates in statutory and non-statutory case reviews
- To participate, when required in audits (including Section 11/175) and other learning activities

- To undertake a bi-annual observation of frontline practice in a partner agency
- To be subject to an annual appraisal led by the safeguarding partners and to participate in peer/ 360 appraisals of other members



## Appendix Three - Safeguarding Partnership Principles, Values and Behaviours

The following **Principles** guide the work of the Safeguarding Partners and are promoted by all partner agencies:

- All children and young people have a right to be safe from abuse and neglect;
- All our work is underpinned by the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Children and young peoples' well-being and safety will be at the heart of all our work;
- All children and young people are unique and all our work will consider and address issues of diversity and vulnerability;
- Agencies and their staff have a shared responsibility to work together and safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare;
- Prevention strategies will be an important aspect of our work to safeguard children and young people;
- The active involvement of children, young people and their families will be incorporated in our work.

To deliver our shared principles all professionals include the following **Values and Behaviours** in all they do to improve outcomes for children, young people and families:

Value	Behaviour
<b>Improving Outcomes for Vulnerable Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate about making a difference for children in Wirral</li> <li>• we fully use the skills, talents and assets of our partners, communities and organisations</li> <li>• we work with families to encourage change</li> </ul>
<b>Honesty and Integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we are open, honest and trustworthy in all we do</li> <li>• we communicate clearly</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership and Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leadership is credible, passionate and ambitious and applies to us all, not just managers</li> <li>• we seek to develop positive relationships with our partners and children, young people and families</li> </ul>
<b>Professionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we work to the highest possible standards</li> <li>• we respond to needs in a timely manner</li> <li>• we learn from and share knowledge and expertise with others</li> </ul>
<b>Equality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we treat everyone with dignity and respect</li> <li>• we always act with fairness and impartiality</li> </ul>
<b>Quality and Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we always seek to raise standards and improve outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Ambition and Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we are risk aware, not risk averse</li> <li>• we are ambitious for our children and young people</li> <li>• we seek innovative and creative solutions</li> <li>• we learn from mistakes</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we are accountable and take responsibility for our personal and organisational actions and decisions</li> </ul>



## Appendix Four – Relevant Agencies in Wirral

- All early years provision including schools including academies, independent, special and alternate provision
- Wirral Metropolitan College and Birkenhead 6th Form College and all providers of 16-18 education and training
- Children's Centres
- Childcare Providers and Nurseries including Child Minders
- Residential Providers
- Independent Fostering and Adoption Agencies
- NHS England
- Adult Social Services
- Housing Providers
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust
- The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust
- Wirral and Cheshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Youth Offending Service
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- Border Force and Immigration Services

- British Transport Police
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- CAFCASS
- Local Authority
- All providers of Sports involving Children including those providing oversight
- All providers of extra-curricular activities to Children including clubs
- All religious organisations in Wirral
- Career Connect
- Barnardo's
- Catch22
- Wired
- Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector including charities, religious organisations and providers of sport and leisure activities



## Appendix Five – Principles of the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) Model

The SFEF model lies at the centre of our multi-agency working with families. The following principles underpin SFEF:

- **A child-centred approach.** Central to this approach is gaining insight into the lived experience of each child in the family. This is essential to gain insight into their world and learn about the needs that are or are not being met. This means learning about a day in their life, how they feel about that experience; what are the positive parts of the day; what parts of the day they dislike or frightens them? It is important that practitioners learn about the daily lived experience of EACH child in the family for the following reasons this:

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- ◇ Gives the child or young person a voice
- ◇ Enables practitioners to step ‘into the child’s shoes’
- ◇ Ensures withdrawn or marginalised children and carers are made more visible
- ◇ Enables the differing needs of siblings to be identified and addressed
- ◇ Increases understanding of the impact on children of parenting behaviours
- ◇ Identifies areas for further assessment
- ◇ Provides a vehicle for measuring progress.

- **Understand the world of the parent/s.** To establish why the needs of a child are not being met it is important to understand what daily life is like for the parent/s. By gaining these insights practitioners can:
  - ◇ Establish what the parent/s is doing during the day and how this impacts on their parenting capacity
  - ◇ Identify the daily promoters and inhibitors that affect the parent/s ability and motivation to meet the needs of the child.
  - ◇ Facilitate discussion about good enough parenting
  - ◇ Promote a holistic perspective of family life and situation
  - ◇ Facilitate family engagement.
- **Recognise family strengths as well as concerns.** It is just as important to identify the needs of each child that are being met as those that are not. In addition, parents need to know what they are doing well in terms of child rearing. Practitioners should try and build on these strengths to address concerns.
- **Engage parents in the change process.** This means assessing evidence of the parent/s ability and motivation to change throughout both the assessment and intervention.
- **Measure change** through actions and interventions of both family and professionals only in terms of quality differences to the lived experience of the child.



## Appendix Six – Funding and Resourcing

The Business Support and QA function, including its staff will be employees of and be accommodated by the Local Authority Children's Services. The staff will directly support the safeguarding partners and the committees and groups of the safeguarding partnership, and the Independent scrutiny function. Posts which will support the partners are:

- Business Manager
- Performance and Quality Assurance Officer
- Safeguarding Training Officer
- Education Safeguarding Training Officer
- Business Administrator
- Assistant Business Administrator

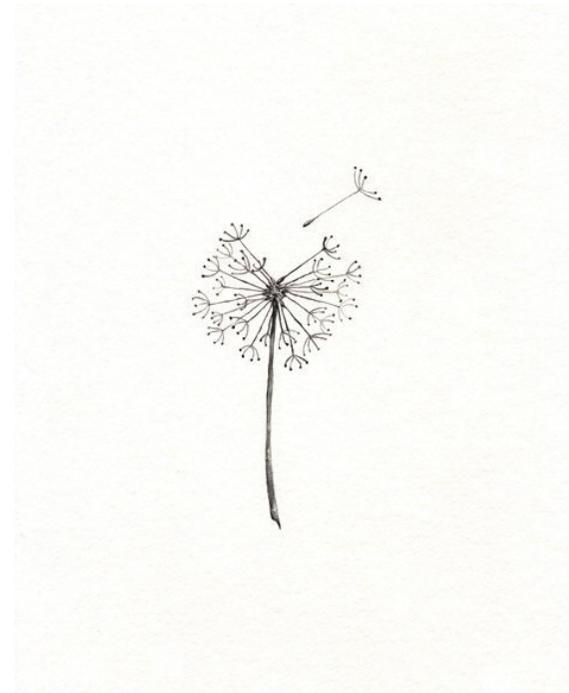
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Year 1 (2019-20) will be a transitional year from the WSCB, which will remain the statutory agency between April and September 2019, and into the new arrangements which will come into effect on 1st September 2019.

Consequently the funding for Year 1 will reflect the WSCB model and include financial contributions from the following partners:

- Wirral LA Children's Services
- Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group
- Merseyside Police
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- CAFCASS

During year 1 a new funding model will be agreed by the partners for Year 2 and beyond.



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**COUNCILLOR  
BERNIE MOONEY**

## **CABINET**

**Monday, 25 March 2019**

### **CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2019 -2022 AND MARKET POSITION STATEMENT**

**Councillor Bernie Mooney, Cabinet Member - Children & Families, said:**

“The numbers of children in care across the North West remains an issue of huge concern and, combined with a decline in the number of available foster care places, means too many young people having to be cared for in children’s homes.

“This new strategy sets out how Wirral will support every child we look after. It demonstrates how we will ensure more foster care places are available, how we will improve how we will develop more alternatives to care, and how we will work with families earlier to prevent the need for children being taken into care in the first place.”

#### **REPORT SUMMARY**

Cabinet members will be aware of the increase in numbers of children looked after in Wirral over the last 3 years. This trend is replicated across the North West. The increase has coincided with a decline in the number of recruited foster carers across the region resulting in all local authorities having difficulties in providing sufficient placements. The supply and demand issue in foster care has resulted in children’s home placements being used for children who previously would have been looked after by foster carers. The overall placement market is therefore more challenging than at any point in recent or distant history. In order to respond to the challenges outlined it is essential that we develop a robust approach to commissioning services, and that we work in a transparent and collaborative manner with placement providers.

Wirral's Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2022 sets out how the local authority and its partners work together to provide the best environments for children in care and care leavers over the next three years. Part of that will include ensuring that there are enough alternatives to care, through for example supporting families to stay together or finding alternative permanent homes for children. It will be about ensuring, where that is not possible, children stay locally and in family-based settings. It will also include ensuring that there is a choice of high-quality provision for all children, at whatever stage in their life, that is designed around their needs and wishes so that they can grow into independent, healthy and successful adults.

The Strategy is aligned to Wirral's Market Position Statement (MPS) which provides an overview of current position and predicted demand for provision over the next two years. This Strategy seeks to outline the Council's overall approach to managing that demand and focusing on the right solutions and choices to provide children with the best possible outcomes.

Children Looked After by Wirral have left their birth family homes and are placed in accommodation across the borough. In this regard, the approval of the Strategy and Market Position Statement is a key decision for Cabinet.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

Cabinet is recommended to

- (1) Approve the Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy 2019 – 2022 attached at appendix 1 to this report; and
- (2) Approve the Market Position Statement attached at appendix 2 to this report.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

- 1.1 The recommendation to approve the documentation is based on the legal requirement to publish a Sufficiency Strategy. The Sufficiency Strategy and Market Position Statement set out our commissioning intentions so that the external market has an opportunity to better respond to identified need.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

Not applicable.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 When children come into care, they become the responsibility of the local authority as the Corporate Parent. As Corporate Parents, we need to ensure that we can offer and provide appropriate accommodation to support our children and young people through their journey to adulthood and beyond. This means ensuring that their welfare, emotional and physical wellbeing is protected and promoted within environments which will support them to reach their full potential.
- 3.2 The duty to provide or procure placements for Children Looked after (Children in Care) is explicit in the Children Act 1989. The introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (implementation April 2011) has provided further clarity on the implementation of section 22G of the Act. These regulations require a strategy to be in place that describes how local authorities intend to provide sufficient care placements for its children in care.
- 3.3 The Statutory Guidance sets out a requirement for local authorities to work with key partners to be in a position to secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care which meets the needs of children and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area.
- 3.4 The Guidance requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must also have regard to the benefits of securing a number of providers and a range of services. Fundamentally, the accommodation available must meet the needs of children.
- 3.5 The Guidance also sets out the commissioning standards for securing sufficient accommodation for children in need who are at risk of care or custody (referred to as children on the edge of care). This is important since it is preferable (where it is in the best interest of the child) to provide support to avoid the need for them to become children in care.

3.6 Attached at appendix 1 is Wirral's Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2022. The Strategy is intended to support the Wirral 2020 Plan and its key themes and deliverables in relation to children and families. The Strategy is dedicated to ensuring that vulnerable children achieve their full potential by providing them with the right conditions and environments in which to thrive. In order to do this, the Strategy outlines eight key objectives to strengthen commissioning and provision over the next three years. These include:

1. Children will be supported to stay with their families where it is safe to do so
2. We will focus on achieving permanency in a timely manner through adoption and special guardianship
3. Most children will live in a local, family placement
4. All children will be matched with good quality placements which meet their needs
5. A range of targeted, universal and specialist services will be available in adequate quantity to respond to children when they need them
6. All children looked after will be prepared for independence and a healthy adulthood
7. We will strengthen our strategic approach to commissioning
8. We will review externally commissioned placements

3.7 The Strategy is underpinned by a set of corporate parenting principles which guide how we work and support children and young people.

3.8 The Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy is aligned with the Market Position Statement (appendix 2). The Statement provides an overview of our current position in terms of care provision for children in care e.g. foster care, residential care and forecasts demand for this provision over the next few years. This forecast is based on detailed analysis of data based on applied methodology. The Position Statement also sets out our commissioning intentions which will ensure that we can meet demand. These have been incorporated as part of the Sufficiency Strategy overarching strategic objectives.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Having a clear and robust commissioning approach is essential to maintaining control over placement costs and achieving better outcomes for children and young people. A number of factors affect our numbers of children looked after and the associated costs. These factors will be kept under regular review to ensure this strategy fully reflects their impact.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Sufficiency Duty and publication of the Sufficiency Strategy is a legal duty as set out in the report.

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

6.1 A small amount of work will need to be undertaken by the media team to prepare and publish the documents.

## 7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is a risk that the predicted need changes over the course of the 3-year strategy which could impact on our strategies to manage demand. To mitigate this, the MPS and Sufficiency strategy will be subject to annual review in March each year to test that our plans and actions are appropriate and relevant to meet need.
- 7.2 There is a risk that the market does not respond as required and so it is essential that we continue to engage with local providers in a proactive and transparent way. We will also ensure that our own in-house services are equipped to respond to the challenges currently faced. Consideration will be given to either block contracting with one or more providers of residential care, and Wirral re-commissioning its own in-house residential provision.

## 8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Work has previously been undertaken with children and young people about what makes a good placement. Consistently young people tell us that they a) want greater opportunities for them to remain living with their birth family members, or b) for placements to be provided locally.
- 8.2 Work will be undertaken via our regular provider forums to outline our commissioning intentions to local service providers and we continue to establish relationships in order to help shape the market appropriately.

## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 While this matter has not been subject to formal equality impact assessment, the commissioning intentions are aimed at ensuring as many children as possible have their needs met at home with their parents, with extended family members, or in local placements.
- 9.2 There are a small number of children and young people who have such specialist needs that placement on Wirral will not be possible. For these children we will aim, through work with Liverpool City Region authorities to jointly commission services as close to Wirral as possible.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Ian Godfrey**  
**Lead Commissioner Children Looked After**  
telephone: 0151 666 4381  
email: [iangodfrey@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:iangodfrey@wirral.gov.uk)

## APPENDICES

1. The Wirral Children Looked After Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2022
2. Wirral's Market Position Statement (MPS) based on current and predicted need

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>

# WIRRAL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY

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*"Making Wirral great for children, young people and their families."*

#BETHE  
DIFFERENCE

## FOREWORD

**“We are committed to securing the best possible outcomes for children in care in Wirral.**

We know that most of our children in Wirral can thrive and be safe in their own families and communities. Where children and young people do need to come into our care, it is essential that we are able to act as responsible corporate parents and support them in their journey to adulthood and beyond. This involves providing the right conditions to allow them to flourish and lead independent, healthy and happy lives.

The Wirral Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy sets out the Council and its partners plans to secure safe and supportive accommodation for children in care and care leavers over the next three years. This includes plans to manage demand in the market by working to reduce the number of children within our care system. We want to ensure we are considering plans for children to have permanent, stable loving homes right from the start. Part of this will include continuing to work with families so that children and young people can return home as soon as possible. It will also be taking timely decisions around adoption to maximise successful matches at the earliest opportunity.

For those children who do need to come into care, we want them to feel the benefit of living in secure family-focussed foster care households. We are proud of our in-house foster carers and we want to do all we can to improve this provision. However, we recognise that for a small number of older children and young people residential care best meets their needs. We want Wirral children to be placed in Wirral. We will work with our partners and the provider market to develop more locally-based places for older children with more complex needs. We will keep a sharp focus on these children through crisper outcome focused care planning, listening to children’s voices and encouraging their ambition.”



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Mooney', written in a cursive style.

**Councillor Bernie Mooney**  
**Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Families**

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## INTRODUCTION

Most children in Wirral are brought up in their own families but a small number of children require the help and support of additional services.

When children come into care, they become the responsibility of the local authority as the corporate parent. As Corporate Parents, we need to ensure that we can offer and provide appropriate accommodation to support our children and young people through their journey to adulthood and beyond. This means ensuring that their welfare, emotional, and physical wellbeing is protected and promoted within environments which will support them to reach their full potential.

Wirral's Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy sets out how the local authority and its partners will work together to provide the best environments for children in care and care leavers over the next three years. Part of that will include ensuring that there are enough alternatives to care, through for example supporting families to stay together or finding alternative permanent homes for children. It will be about ensuring, where that is not possible, children stay locally and in family based settings. It will also include ensuring that there is a choice of high-quality provision for all children, at whatever stage in their life, that is designed around their needs and wishes so that they can grow into independent, healthy and successful adults.

The Strategy is aligned to Wirral's Market Position Statement which provides an overview of the current position and predicted demand for provision. This Strategy seeks to outline the Council's overall approach to managing that demand and focusing on the right solutions and choices to provide children with the best possible outcomes.

### The Sufficiency Duty

The duty to provide or procure placements for Children Looked after (Children in Care) is explicit in the Children Act 1989. These regulations require a strategy to be in place that describes how local authorities intend to provide sufficient care placements for its children in care. The introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (implementation April 2011) has provided further clarity on the implementation of section 22G of the Act.

The Statutory Guidance sets out a requirement for local authorities to work with key partners to be in a position to secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care which meets the needs of children and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area.

The Guidance requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must also have regard to the benefits of securing a number of providers and a range of services. Fundamentally, the accommodation available must meet the needs of children.

The Guidance also sets out the commissioning standards for securing sufficient accommodation for children in need who are at risk of care or custody (referred to as children on the edge of care). This is important since it is preferable (where it is in the best interest of the child) to provide support to avoid the need for them to become children in care.

### **Current context**

Over the last 2 years, the number of children in care in Wirral has increased by around 25%. While this increase has been mirrored both regionally and nationally, the situation in Wirral is slightly more acute due to the baseline being higher than in most other local authorities (i.e. the rate of children looked after in Wirral has always been higher than comparator authorities). This has put increasing demand on local authority children's services and partner organisations who provide support and care for families.

At the same time, for the past two years, Wirral's Children's Services has been subject to intervention by Ofsted and has embarked on a rigorous improvement drive to strengthen core services for children. This has involved significant investment in the workforce and in building capacity within key teams. It has focussed on clarifying processes to ensure their consistent application and building key relationships with partners across the sector.

It is essential that this Strategy reflects the good practice which has taken place to date and outlines an approach which focusses on building on improvement in all areas so that we can continue to embark on improving outcomes for Wirral children.

### **Link to strategic framework**

The Wirral Council Plan: A 2020 Vision sets out a number of key themes and deliverables specific to Children, Young People and Families.

- Wirral is a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected and every child gets a good start in life
- Vulnerable Children Reach Their Full Potential
- Reduce Child and Family Poverty

The Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy intends to support the delivery of the key priorities for children in the 2020 Plan.

## PROFILE OF WIRRAL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- There are more children looked after in Wirral than in similar authorities with 842 children looked after on 1 January 2019. This equates to a rate of 124 per 10,000.
- The highest demand for children becoming looked after currently is for children under the age of one.
- The largest cohort of children in care by age is the 10 to 15 age group. This is also the hardest group to find placements for.
- Our use of foster placements is slightly higher than in similar authorities 75% compared to 73% nationally.
- 62% of Children Looked After are placed with Wirral foster carers in either mainstream or family and friends care. This is still slightly higher than similar authorities who have 55% of their children placed with their own foster carers.
- 16% of Children Looked After are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies which is slightly lower than in similar authorities.
- Use of residential placements is slightly higher at 9% (England Average 8%).
- 12% of children looked after are placed with their parents which is higher than the England average which is 6%.
- 10% of CLA discharged from care were adopted in 2017/18 which is lower than the national average (13%).
- 93% Wirral children are placed within 20 miles or less of their home, which is a higher number than in similar authorities.
- 10% of children looked after are placed outside Wirral.
- At any one time there are between 175 and 221 children placed in Wirral by other authorities. This is more children than Wirral places outside of Wirral.
- It has become increasingly hard to find placements for Wirral children as the overall demand across all sectors is outstripping supply. Independent Fostering Agencies in the North West have reported having 3 referrals for every vacancy they have. Some Wirral children needing a move to a permanent placement have been known to wait several weeks if not months for the right option to become available.
- Wirral has experienced increased numbers of children in residential care reflecting the lack of available foster placements as the fostering market has become saturated.

## VISION

Our vision is to:

### ***“Make Wirral great for children, young people and their families”***

In order to do this, we have outlined 8 key objectives to provide focus for activity:

1. Children will be supported to stay with their families where it is safe to do so
2. We will focus on achieving permanency in a timely manner through adoption and special guardianship
3. Most children will live in a local, family placement
4. All children will be matched with good quality placements which meet their needs
5. A range of targeted, universal and specialist services will be available in adequate quantity to respond to children when they need them
6. All children looked after will be prepared for independence and a healthy adulthood
7. We will strengthen our strategic approach to commissioning
8. We will review externally commissioned placements

## PRINCIPLES

Wirral Council and its partners are committed to the seven principles of corporate parenting outlined in the 2017 Children and Social Work Act. These are:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To consider the view, wishes and feelings of children and young people.
4. To help children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the local authority.
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people.
6. For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and,
7. To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

These principles will guide how we work to support children in care in order to deliver the aims and objectives we have identified.

## ACHIEVING THE VISION

### 1. Children will be supported to stay with their families where it is safe to do so

Wirral has started to develop more robust edge of care practices through the establishment of effective early and pre-birth pathways. We are embedding earlier identification of pre-birth concerns and providing additional support to children and parents. This is becoming widely recognised as effective practice. To build on this, we are establishing an infant edge of care team to ensure that the needs of children in their very early stages of life can be addressed without recourse to public care where it is safe to do so.

We have also established an Adolescent Support Hub which encompasses a range of targeted and additional youth support projects and activities for young people aged 11-19 years old. We need to strengthen this support by establishing a team which will provide counselling, key worker and substance misuse support and interventions for young people across levels 2-4 of the continuum of need.

To strengthen and build on our approach to supporting young people aged 11-19, we are establishing a more robust Targeted Youth Support service which can offer a vibrant, flexible and modern youth offer for young people that meets their needs at levels 2/3 on the continuum of need. For those children at levels 3/4, we are redesigning current services to develop an Edge of Care Service which provides intensive support for young people to de-escalate risk and work alongside families to enable children to remain safely at home within their family and community. The Adolescent Edge of Care Team will also work with homeless 16/17-year olds to support them to remain at home where it is safe for them to do so.

Wirral is also committed to developing processes for the considerations of opportunities to reunify children in short term foster care with their families. This will include in-depth work with families and the child to facilitate their return home. We will develop a targeted approach to reunification, based on the principles of the NSPCC reunification approach. This will help us to identify and embed effective early help practice in some of our most challenging families.

### 2. We will focus on achieving permanency in a timely manner through adoption and special guardianship

21 Wirral children were adopted in the financial year ending 31st March 2018 and this amounts to 10% of all children who were discharged from care in the year. The national rate of children adopted is 13%. Over the next 3 years we aim to achieve a proportion of children adopted from care that is at least in line with the national average. As at 1st January 2019 Wirral has 62 children subject to a placement order, while a number of these are now actually placed for adoption, we are aware that progression to adoption has not always occurred in a timely manner. In 2018 we introduced new tracking arrangements to ensure improved performance in this area of work and by the end of March 2019 we anticipate increased numbers of children adopted in the current financial year.

We have consolidated our practice for recruitment of adopters through the Regional Adoption Agency (4 local authorities) which means we can co-ordinate a much better campaign approach. The new agency - AIM (Adoption in Merseyside) has a mission to successfully place children with a plan for adoption more quickly. Every year, the four local authorities approve around 100 adopters and place approximately 140 children for adoption. The pooling of resources and consolidating good practice will enable us to make the most of key events such as National Adoption Week, local and national media campaigns. The next stage in the joint plan is to appoint a Marketing Officer to spread the word across Merseyside with the view that this person will attend and organise a whole host of campaign activity.

AIM brings together a team of around 50 staff from across the four councils under existing terms and conditions. Staff will continue to have a presence in each of their local authority areas to ensure they retain close links with social work staff. By working regionally, we will be able to reach a wider group of potential adopters, share expertise and ideas and make sure adopters and children get a consistent level of support, regardless of where they live. We are confident, both as individual authorities as well as a Regional Agency, that this will lead to permanency via adoption for an increased number of Children Looked After.

### **3. Most children will live in a local, family placement**

We currently place 75% of Children Looked After overall in foster placements, of which 62% are placed with Wirral carers. We will continue to build on that figure in our ongoing recruitment efforts which will be especially focused on securing in-house carers for the most complex and challenging Looked After Children. Our overall aim will be to increase the proportion of children in foster placements to 78% of the Children Looked After population, and to increase the in-house market share to 68%.

We are acutely aware that to achieve this, will require a significant increase in the overall number of applicants we can attract and take through the assessment and approval process. We are restructuring our fostering service to ensure an improved focus on recruitment and developing a targeted approach that seeks to attract carers who match the profile of current and predicted future need.

This will specifically include a focus on placements for larger sibling groups in order to avoid the need for separating siblings when it is in their best interests to be placed together; respite arrangements to better support our Edge of Care offer and wider support to our own foster carers; a scheme aimed at step down from residential care for children who's needs can be better met in family-based substitute care.

Wirral's current use of residential care (not including Residential Special Schools) extends to around 8.5% of the Children Looked After population. This is slightly higher than the national average (8%) and similarly slightly more of this provision is outside the local authority boundary although a significant amount is within the Liverpool City Region and therefore within 20 miles of Wirral.

At the present time all residential provision is externally purchased mainly through the North West Framework. While this enables a sustainable average cost for some placements, mainly those within Wirral those that are further afield and with larger national providers have become increasingly costly.

Our key aims in relation to residential care are to

a) ensure that only those children who's needs are best met in residential care utilise such accommodation and

b) that where residential care is the placement of choice, a greater proportion is provided locally.

This will ensure greater consistency and access to local health and education services. We plan to reduce our reliance on residential care from the current level of 62 placements to 50 over the timeframe of the 3-year plan, and further to ensure that a higher proportion of provision is available within Wirral. Our means of achieving this will be via

a) improved collaborative working with local providers, and

b) looking at the feasibility of Wirral starting to provide its own in-house children's home service.

#### **4. All children will be matched with good quality placements which meet their needs**

We know that to secure the most appropriate placements for looked after children, we need to understand their needs and capture their views effectively and make decisions for placements that will meet those needs/wishes. This will help to prevent and reduce the risk of placement breakdown. This also means identifying and securing the 'right' placements as quickly as possible so as not to prevent drift and delay.

We recognise that in order to do this we need to identify, gather and supply good quality information which details their needs and views accurately. We have already been working with social workers to help them understand the need to improve the quality of our commissioning documents in order to avoid children being inappropriately matched and/or placed out of the borough. We now need to continue to involve them in improving the quality of information supplied to the placements commissioning team so that providers fully understand the needs of the child in order to achieve good matching.

We will continue to work with social workers to understand how to use the commissioning process to get the right placement and support for their child; and understand what their responsibilities are before, during and after a placement. We also need to review our internal decision-making processes to assure ourselves that there is no duplication of effort or unnecessary hurdles that might introduce undue delay to the timeliness of securing placements on offer.

Further work will be carried out to review and improve the documentation we use when finding placements for children to make the matching of a child's needs with what a placement offers better and review the placement finding function in the context of reach, resource, processes and skills to ensure we maximise access and opportunities to secure best fit local placements, as and when needed.

We have and continue to collect and collate data about local placement quality and availability, but we are aware that we need to adopt a much more proactive and rigorous approach in this area of work; to this end we are increasing our capacity by recruiting to a number of data analyst and management information posts that will help inform strategic commissioning intentions going forward. Moreover, these posts will increase our confidence in the validity of data that is critical to ensuring local sufficiency. We want to ensure that our residential placements are not just meeting national minimum standards but are of high quality to secure the specific outcomes identified in the care plans of looked after children.

In relation to Semi-Independent Accommodation for post 16 and care leavers, we are acutely aware that this remains an unregulated area and, therefore, needs careful oversight and robust commissioning processes to ensure young people are appropriately safeguarded. We are already in regular and routine discussions with our current providers to ensure quality and consistency in delivery and they are keen to explore with us increased local provision. Our colleagues in Housing are also involved in monitoring lease agreements with the providers. Our plans moving forward include looking for new and innovative approaches to partnership working that will ensure better quality provision for this cohort of young people.

## 5. A range of targeted, universal and specialist services will be available in adequate quantity to respond to children when they need them

We know that a high proportion of our looked after children have complex needs, which include:

- Mental health issues, particularly those not meeting the threshold for Tier 4 services and/or those who are stepping down from Tier 4 provision and assessed as fit for discharge.
- Young people expressing trauma through violence towards other young people, carers and/or staff, these young people tend to have a label of ADHD, ODD etc. which is often a misrepresentation of their presenting difficulties that are more likely to be attachment based.
- Young people stepping down from secure welfare or Youth Justice Board provision.
- Young people with a pattern of missing, risk of CSE, self-harm, risk of criminality.
- Young people who need an evidence-based model of therapeutic support.

It is essential that the emotional, social and physical needs of children and young people are considered when matching placements. This is part of our commitment as corporate parents to provide them not just with appropriate accommodation but also with places to live which meet their developmental needs. We need to work with partners to make sure there is a holistic offer of support available to respond to children and young people involving the full range of universal, targeted and specialist services.

Providers tell us that they are sometimes unable or unwilling to take our more complex young people as they feel Ofsted do not recognise small step changes for these young people as good outcomes. Providers therefore view complexity as a business risk which may lead to a lower regulatory rating. We are also aware that one of the challenges foster carers are experiencing relates to problems with children with complex challenging behaviours where additional support from services is required.

In order to mitigate this, we want to ensure that providers are linked into and have a good understanding of the full support offer available from universal, targeted and specialist services and are able to work with the local authority to identify and access what is required to support young people in their care. We want to be able to emphasise the unique selling point of looking after children in Wirral, knowing that children placed will be Wirral children, with a "holistic service all under one roof".

Part of our approach to delivering this will be to continue to pursue our work in partnership with Health and provide a more responsive CAMHS service. This will support carers better where behavioural, mental health, and attachment issues are causing placement instability.

## **6. All children looked after will be prepared for independence and a healthy adulthood**

Young people approaching adulthood need nurturing care, positive boundaries and guidance to make that transition. We will ensure they are well-prepared to leave our care and have a good range of options for their accommodation.

The unregulated SAILs market poses potential risks for children leaving care and work is underway across the Liverpool City Region with our partner Registered Social Landlord providers to understand and monitor the Supported Accommodation and Independent Living sector. Our aim is to work collaboratively with this sector to ensure good quality and appropriate accommodation for care leavers.

Part of this is engaging with care leavers about the type of accommodation they require but also what other services can be provided to ensure that they can enjoy independence. This includes for example, assistance with looking for employment opportunities, financial advice, health support which could be provided by social landlords or personal advisors.

## **7. We will strengthen our strategic approach to commissioning**

It is essential that we can develop our commissioning intentions and strategic relationships in a coherent and constructive manner. We have recognised a gap in our strategic commissioning capacity and are taking steps to address this. Our aim is to become “The Customer of Choice” where our providers are concerned. We have already established good relationships with providers through our co-designed provider forums. We now need to have more ‘mature’ conversations about sharing future predicted need to inform their business models and to help shape our market.

Part of this will be understanding what it is like for them to do business with Wirral and enable us to establish better relationships with the best providers to support them in wanting to offer places to our children looked after. What would make the difference between an offer and a refusal, what are the constraints and considerations they must consider and what measure we might need to undertake to improve our chances with them

A specific focus for us will be securing provision that meets the need of children looked after who are aged over 16. We have identified that the current SAILs market has potential to pose risk and as previously outlined, are working collaboratively with colleagues to put local regulatory measures in place to address this.

We also need to engage with local IFA's to consider such issues as duplication of effort, over/under supply of targeted placements, shaping recruitment to Wirral's needs and development of complimentary rather than competitive strategies. We will also consider the advantages or otherwise of trying to recruit in-house carers for our most complex and challenging children, knowing that to do so would mean any success would be exclusively ours and, equally, that IFA's find it no easier to recruit these carers than we do.

Where it is not reasonably practicable for a child to be placed on the Wirral it is important to ensure there are mechanisms in place to widen the range of provision in neighbouring areas, the sub-region or region. Wirral Council and its partners continue to collaborate with neighbouring authorities and their partners to shape the market for services for children looked after and commission regionally or sub-regionally. We are committed to pro-actively engaging with partners both within Wirral and across the city-region and will continue to build relationships with the clear purpose of shaping local solutions to meet local need.

## **8. We will review externally commissioned placements**

As outlined in Wirral's Market Position Statement, one of the key challenges for Wirral is the number of children placed on Wirral who are from other local authorities. At present, between 175 and 221 CLA from other authorities are placed on Wirral. This has had an impact on the ability for us to place children within local placements.

We need to market profile where the children from other authorities placed in Wirral have come from in order to establish a full and deep understanding of why and how the children have become placed in Wirral. This also needs to include obtaining a full understanding of how the impact the current situation might have on local services. i.e. CAMHS, Youth Services, Police, and Health.

We will engage with the full range of partners, including local schools and colleges to develop our knowledge and to explore new and innovative solutions to address the current placement challenges outlined.

### **ACTION PLAN**

Attached at Appendix A is proposed action for how we will achieve and co-ordinate our objectives outlined.

### **CONCLUSION**

This strategy sets out the overall approach to managing demand and focusing on the right solutions and choices to provide children with the best possible outcomes.

## APPENDIX 1: THE ACTION PLAN

NO.	ACTION/S	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	STATUS
1	Review internal decision making/sign off to assure ourselves that there is no duplication of effort, unnecessary hurdles or other aspect that might introduce undue delay to the timeliness of searching for, agreeing to and securing of placements	CLA Lead Commissioner	31 March 2019	RED
2	Establish strong and routine engagement with front-line colleagues to increase and maintain understanding of their responsibilities in the process	Placements Commissioning Manager	31 July 2018 and Ongoing	AMBER
3	Review referrals and the current template in the context of quality, balance, context and mitigation to ensure we are "selling" the child in a manner that will maximise the chances/choices of placement offer/s	Placements Commissioning Manager	By 31 July 2018	AMBER
4	Engage with our local providers to the extent that we understand what it is like for them to do business with Wirral, what would make the difference between an offer and a refusal, what are the constraints and considerations they must take into account and what measure we might need to undertake to improve our chances with them	Lead Commissioner/ Placements Commissioning Manager	Commenced in 2019 Ongoing via regular provider forums Commencing	GREEN
5	Establish a full and deep understanding of why and how 175 CLA from other LA's are placed in Wirral. What specific placements they are occupying set against our own projected needs. Why we have not accessed those placements for Wirral children. What impact those placements have on local resources, i.e. CAMHS, Youth Services, Health, Police etc.	Lead Commissioner	31 March 2019	RED
6	Establish at the earliest opportunity, a clear remit for the Liverpool City Region in the context of sufficiency	Placements Commissioning Manager	Work has commenced. Regional Group meets regularly and will be ongoing	GREEN

NO.	ACTION/S	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RAG STATUS
7	Review the placement finding function in the context of reach, resource, process, skills etc. and establish a one stop shop for placement referrals to ensure we maximise access and opportunities to secure best fit local placements as and when needed	Placements Commissioning Manager	By 31 March 2019	AMBER
8	Introduce permanent capacity to interrogate, validate, interpret and report on data and management information, including but not limited to, trends analysis, market pressures, regulation and inspection etc.	Lead Commissioner	Completed	GREEN
9	Ensure that we have all the possible tools available to aid effective and efficient placement searches, i.e. databases (CHARMS), access to market intelligence/ monitoring information, strategic relations etc.	Placements Commissioning Manager	By 31 March 2019	AMBER
10	Develop a process/tool to understand why placements breakdown to reduce the instances of breakdown and inform the matching process	Placements Commissioning Manager	By 31 March 2019	RED



# MARKET POSITION STATEMENT 2019

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*"Making Wirral great for children, young people and their families."*

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## FOREWORD

**As part of Wirral Borough Council's 2020 vision, a key commitment to all Wirral children, including children looked after and care leavers, is that we will ensure:**

- they are ready for school,
- ready for work and adulthood
- that they will be supported to reach their full potential.

This market position statement focuses on helping the Council to meet this commitment and ensure that all children and young people looked after have a happy stable home with carers who are committed to nurturing and supporting them. Wherever possible we aim to place children and young people locally on the Wirral. Our intention is for providers to access this market position statement to inform any new business developments or to review their current business models to offer a robust response to need which can adapt flexibly to meet the changing needs of the Children Looked After population on the Wirral and can offer stability to the marketplace in the years ahead.

We understand that our relationship with providers is crucial to the ongoing shaping and development of high quality services. Elected Members, Senior Managers and Commissioners will play a key role in ensuring that Wirral refreshes and publishes its Sufficiency Strategy and that the Council's aspiration of continuously improving the services for children looked after becomes a reality, based firmly on the needs, wishes and voice of children and young people.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Mooney'.

**Councillor Bernie Mooney**  
**Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Families**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Boyce'.

**Paul Boyce**  
**Director of Children's Services**

## CONTEXT

Wirral's Children Looked After (CLA) numbers have been rising over the course of the last two years with an increase of 70 between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. This mirrors an upward trend nationally although Wirral's traditionally high numbers means that we have a significantly higher rate per 10,000 (125) than national, regional, and similar local authority comparators.

While the upward trend appears to have levelled off in the last 12 months, reducing overall numbers continues to present significant challenges.

A snapshot picture as at the 1st January 2019 tells us that Wirral's Children Looked After (CLA) population stood at 842. Of these the information below illustrates the number of children and young people placed with external residential, independent fostering (IFA) and supported accommodation and independent living providers (SAILS).

## CURRENT MARKET POSITION

### RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

Across the provider market locally there are 33 residential placements available on the Wirral, including 4 parent and child placements. We currently have 69 externally commissioned placements, 22 in-borough and 47 out of borough, we are therefore accessing only 67% of the available local residential market.

TOTAL no. of placements	69
TOTAL no. of placements Inside LA	22
TOTAL no. of placements Outside LA	47
% Placements Inside LA Boundary	32

Source: Placements Commissioning Service: Placements Tracker (January 2019)

## PREDICTED NEED FOR LOCAL RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Despite the apparent 'oversupply' of beds and homes in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) (Source sub-regional placement sufficiency statement: Liverpool City Region 2016), Wirral is still struggling to secure local residential placements for local children. Currently 32 children are placed over 20 miles outside of the local authority border and 15 are placed 20 miles or less outside the LA boundary. External factors such as LCR and the North West being used as a national market are seriously impeding the ability to secure local placements for local children. Providers tell us that they are unable or unwilling to take our more complex young people as they feel OFSTED do not recognise small step changes for these young people as good outcomes and they view complexity as a business risk which may lead to a lower regulatory rating.

Current gaps in residential services are for Wirral young people who present with the following needs:

- Mental health issues, particularly those not meeting the threshold for Tier 4 services and/or those who are stepping down from Tier 4 provision and assessed as fit for discharge.
- Young people expressing trauma through violence towards other young people, carers and/or staff, these young people tend to have a label of ADHD, ODD etc. which is often a misrepresentation of their presenting difficulties that are more likely to be attachment based.
- Young people stepping down from secure welfare or Youth Justice Board provision.
- Young people with a pattern of missing, risk of CSE, self-harm, risk of criminality.
- Young people who are in need of an evidence based model of therapeutic support and that a residential provision could be secured to offer this a short-term intervention.
- Young people who need short term residential intervention as part of a long term step down plan to fostering and or home.

Emerging data and analysis of need from Wirral's strategic CLA group was as follows with regard to predicted need for residential placements over the next three years.

AGE PROFILE	AS AT 1.4.2018	AS AT 1.4.2019	AS AT 1.4.2020	AS AT 1.4.2021
Under 1	2	2	2	2
1-4 years	1	1	1	1
5-9 years	1	1	1	1
10-15 years	42	38	36	33
16 plus	24	22	21	19
<b>Totals</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>

## INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCIES (IFA's)

Across the IFA market the last estimated figures (*Source: OFSTED/PNW fostering data collection 2016 and 903*) for Wirral was 229 approved foster beds. We currently have as at 1st January 2019 104 IFA placements externally commissioned, 55 in borough and 49 out of borough equating to 47% of our total externally commissioned placements. We are accessing only 24% of the local market.

TOTAL no. of placements	104
TOTAL no. of placements Inside LA	55
TOTAL no. of placements Outside LA	49
% Placements Inside LA Boundary	53

*Source: Placements Commissioning Service: Placements Tracker (January 2019)*

**PREDICTED NEED FOR LOCAL INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCY PLACEMENTS**

As with the data and analysis of future need for residential provision illustrated above, Wirral's strategic CLA leads are predicting the following demand for IFA placements over the next three years.

AGE PROFILE	AS AT 1.4.2018	AS AT 1.4.2019	AS AT 1.4.2020	AS AT 1.4.2021
Under 1	9	8	8	7
1-4 years	5	5	5	4
5-9 years	23	21	20	18
10-15 years	35	32	30	28
16 plus	10	9	8	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>65</b>

### SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION AND INDEPENDENT LIVING PROVIDERS (SAILS)

As at the 1st January 2019 the snapshot headline figures were as illustrated below for SAILS provision for Wirral young people of which 10 placements host Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.

TOTAL no. of placements	42
TOTAL no. of placements Inside LA	25
TOTAL no. of placements Outside LA	17
% Placements Inside LA Boundary	60

*Source: Placements Commissioning Service: Placements Tracker (January 2019)*

## COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS BASED ON PREDICTED NEED FOR SaLS

Because there are a range of young people who could be placed in SaL provisions, producing a prediction of demand is challenging. We have used the over 16 CLA rate published in the 903 Return as a proxy for potential demand. As at the 2016 903 return, Wirral's demand for SaLS placements was 12% of its total over 16 CLA population. Of all placements purchased 8% were for floating support with accommodation and 92% were for group living/semi-independent. As illustrated below the current demand is higher than would be anticipated on this formula. The predicted need from April 2019 is based on the above formula. *Source: 903 2016 and PNW SaL Census 2017.*

AGE PROFILE	AS AT 1.4.2018	AS AT 1.4.2019	AS AT 1.4.2020	AS AT 1.4.2021
16-18 years	34	14	13	12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>

The challenge and opportunity with the above figures for the local authority is that we are committed to placing Wirral children, where safe and appropriate, on the Wirral and wish to work with providers delivering locally to co-produce creative, collaborative solutions with us to enable this to become a reality. To this end the Children's Services Commissioning Team is committed to pro-actively engaging with the provider market locally and will continue to build relationships with the clear purpose of shaping local solutions to meet local need.

An additional challenge is that other local authorities (OLA's) occupy 217 of the available residential or fostering placements on the Wirral, impacting on all services locally, universal, targeted and specialist and reducing local choice.

We know regionally in the North West that the market is a national one. Some provider's business models are based on an expectation of a high level of inward placements. Despite a notional surplus of placements in the region, the local market is not shaped as yet to meet local needs.

## OVERARCHING COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS FOR WIRRAL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Our overarching intention is aspirational for all Wirral children and young people looked after. We will ensure that where other safe and appropriate permanency options are not available to the child, quality, local placements will be commissioned to meet need. Sufficiency will be secured in such a way that the following outcomes can be achieved:

- All children are placed in appropriate placements with access to the support services they require in Wirral, except where this is not consistent with their welfare.
- All children looked after will be prepared for independence and a healthy adulthood.
- The full range of universal, targeted and specialist services work together to meet children's needs in an integrated way in the local area, including children who are already looked after, as well as those at risk of care or custody.
- Where it is not reasonably practicable for a child to be placed on the Wirral, there are mechanisms in place to widen the range of provision in neighbouring areas, the sub-region or region.
- Partners, including housing and RP's, work together to secure a range of provision to meet the needs of those who are looked after at the age of 16 and 17, and support the continuity of accommodation beyond the age of 18.
- Services are available in adequate quantity to respond to children, including predicted demand for a range of needs, and emergencies.
- In addition to meeting relevant national minimum standards, services are of high quality to secure the specific outcomes identified in the care plans of looked after children.
- Services are situated across Wirral to reflect geographical distribution of need.
- Placement providers (including private, voluntary and public sector providers) are linked into the wider network of services and work with these services to offer appropriate support to deliver identified outcomes for looked after children.
- Universal services know when a child is looked after and have good links with the range of targeted and specialist services, including placement providers.
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure that professionals involved in placement decisions have sufficient knowledge and information about the supply and quality of placements and availability of all specialist, targeted and universal support services within Wirral.
- Wirral Local Authority and its partners continue to collaborate with neighbouring authorities and their partners to shape the market for services for children looked after and commission regionally or sub-regionally.

## CONCLUSION

This market position statement focuses on helping the Council to meet this commitment and ensure that all children and young people looked after have a happy stable home with carers who are committed to nurturing and supporting them. It identifies the current position in relation to:

1. Residential Children's Homes;
2. Independent Fostering Agencies; and,
3. Supported Accommodation and Independent Living providers (SaILS)

It also sets out the Council's commissioning intentions based on predicted demand for these placements.

The Statement outlines our overarching commissioning intentions for Children Looked After and in order to provide clear and focussed aims for ensuring there is good quality local placements for all young people in our care.



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