

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 25 September 2019

Present: Councillor W Clements (Chair)

Councillors K Cannon I Lewis
J Robinson C Povall
S Spoor A Wright
P Stuart C Carubia
KJ Williams C Cooke
G Wood Penn
J Johnson

In attendance Chris Penn, Diocese of Chester

Apologies Councillors Y Nolan

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Yvonne Nolan and Julie M Johnson, Deputy Director of Schools, Diocese of Shrewsbury.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chairman noted that for Item 6 (Minute 14 – Summary of Standards – Provisional Outcomes for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) most Councillors were school governors.

Councillor Wendy Clements declared a personal interest in Item 6 as she was employed as an Early Years Educator and Administrator for Moreton Baptist Preschool

Councillor Ian Lewis declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Leasowe Play Youth and Community Association.

Councillor Sarah Spoor declared a personal interest as a member of PCPW - Parent, Carer, Participation Wirral.

Councillor Jean Robinson declared a personal interest as she was connected with an Early Years Contract.

Councillor Chris Cooke declared a personal interest as a supply teacher in Wirral and Merseyside.

There were no declarations made in respect of the application of a party whipping arrangement.

11 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12 **2019/20 QUARTER 1 WIRRAL PLAN PERFORMANCE INCLUDING UPDATE JOURNEY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Wirral Plan Performance

The Corporate Director for Children Services presented the report which provided the 2019/20 Quarter 1 (April - June 2019) performance report for the Wirral Plan pledges under the remit of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members asked questions about specific parts of the report, including an update on the school attendance procedures where the services had undergone a restructure. Attendance would be dealt with as an issue for the child's family, with police, social workers and health professionals involved if necessary.

The Ofsted inspection in June had taken Children's Services out of the category of 'inadequate' and it was now rated as 'required improvement to be good' with 'good' leadership. The services were now more self-aware, and more children benefitted from intervention at an earlier age, which should help reduce assistance later in life, breaking the cycle of need. Improvements were still planned and worked toward. There would be additional visits by Ofsted, assistance from a supporting authority and themed inspections.

Members questioned the culture of the service and how it managed with restrictions in funding and workforce.

Domestic abuse

The Lead Commissioner Community Services & Resilience updated Members on the Council's plans to tackle domestic abuse. There had been a five-year pledge of zero tolerance which was considered to have increased reporting and confidence, and there was a commitment to have a new strategy beyond 2020, which would include a 'victim's voice' aspect. Police data was presented and discussed, including support for child witnesses and gender equality in publicity.

RESOLVED:

That the 2019/2020 quarter 1 Wirral Plan performance report be noted.

13 **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT OUTTURN 2018/19 AND ESTIMATE FOR QUARTER 1 2019/20**

The Principal Accountant introduced this report which set out the financial monitoring information for the Children Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The report provided Members with detail to scrutinise budget performance for this area of activity. The financial information covers the final position for 2018/19 and the financial information in quarter 1 2019/20.

The 2018/19 outturn was balanced with overspends balanced by savings in different areas. There were trends for increases in the care costs, but performed favourably compared with the other Northwest authorities. There was a forecast of a £2.7 million adverse in Q1, mostly from social care and looked after children, where there were increasingly complex needs and increasing market rate.

Members queried anti-social behaviour support.

RESOLVED:

That the financial monitoring report for the 2018/2019 outturn and 2019/2020 quarter 1 be noted.

14 **SUMMARY OF STANDARDS – PROVISIONAL OUTCOMES FOR EARLY YEARS, KEY STAGE 1 AND KEY STAGE 2 SEPTEMBER 2019**

The Assistant Director Education presented this report which provided a very detailed analysis of outcomes for all pupil groups at the end of each key stage in the primary phase of education. Comparisons had been made with the results nationally wherever possible. There would be a separate report for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Generally, the gender gap in attainment had narrowed but only because girls' achievement had decreased. Phonics were now in line with national figures. There would be an aim of sharing good practice between schools, and Members noted that all schools engaged with the statistics irrespective of their management status.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards 2019 reports be noted and shared with headteachers and used as an essential tool to challenge underperformance as well as celebrate successes/improvements in Wirral schools.

15 **CAMHS (CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES) REPORT**

The Senior Commissioning Manager – Mental Health and the Director for Health and Wellbeing presented this report which had been requested by the Committee to provide an update in respect of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) waiting times, Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections undertaken in 2019.

The report provided a summary of CAMHS service delivery in Wirral, the steps being taken by the service provider to address the current performance and the plans for the future service model to ensure safe and effective care. It also outlined the key highlights from the 2019 Ofsted inspection and the next steps. A separate report relating to the CQC findings had been submitted to Committee Members and would be presented by Director of Quality, Wirral Health and Care Council.

Members questioned the detail behind the report, including money from central Government for mental health support in schools, emotional regulation workshops, waiting times and triage. Members noted the trends in reasons for referrals which included: online culture; bullying; peer pressure; exam pressure; and trauma from adverse childhood experiences.

RESOLVED:

The CAMHS update report be noted.

16 **WORKING PROTOCOL WITH WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP**

The Business Manager updated Members on the new Safeguarding Children Partnership. A workshop had been held in January 2019 with Members of the Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board. The workshop was to give Members an overview of the new safeguarding arrangements and make recommendations before the new Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership launched on 26 September 2019.

One of the recommendations had been to formulate a new working protocol. The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been involved in scrutinising children's safeguarding in different ways and clear working arrangements and expectations were necessary. The draft protocol was included as an appendix to the report.

There was also an independent scrutiny function for the Board, and the Committee could be a part of that by receiving reports from the Board, starting with an interim report in March 2020 covering the first 6 months of activity.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) **the updated draft protocol be approved.**
- 2) **The Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee provide a scrutiny function to the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board by receiving and commenting on regular reports of the Board's activity.**

17 **REALITY CHECK VISIT - FAMILY MATTERS**

This report set out the outcomes of a Reality Check Visit to Family Matters held on 22 July 2019. It had involved a visit to the Family Matters Teams based in Rock Ferry, so Members could look at the effects of co-location on the teams there.

The Chairman noted that Members had been encouraged by the positive impact of co-location. They had talked with the teams involved in keeping young people of various ages out of care and moving them in the right direction.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) **the contents of the report be noted and the following comments and recommendations be approved:**
- 2) **Several teams advised that they had requested mediation training to enhance their ability to help families. Members would like reassurance that this can be delivered.**
- 3) **Members were interested by the outstanding Ofsted inspection in Leeds and their use of family group conferencing and early help. Members would support the growth of early help schemes in Wirral to improve outcomes for Children and Families and will look forward to seeing this service helping to reduce the number of children in care.**

18 **WORKSHOP REPORT - YOUTH REVIEW**

This report set out the outcomes of a scrutiny workshop held on 24 July 2019 for Members to gain an overview of, feed into, the 3-month Youth Review. Members had made a series of recommendations following the workshop. The Review looked at gathering opinion on the current activities and support services available to young people in the Wirral. Officers wanted to understand from young people themselves what activities they used, and

what they would like to see available in the future as well as the support and advice they want going forward.

The next step in the Review was for an update report to cabinet in October, with a business case to Cabinet in February 2020.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) **the contents of the report be noted and the following comments and recommendations be agreed:**
- 2) **What is apparent is the lack of information out there and members agreed that pivotal to success will be the delivery of the project. It needs to all be one page.**
- 3) **Bus routes, passes, transport all cited as problems, including parents own perception of public transport. However, Members did suggest using the youth officer as an opportunity to lobby and suggested the possibility of bus companies and Merseyrail sponsoring youth services.**
- 4) **It was also agreed that both local and national companies could invest in young people and local projects as they are future employees.**
- 5) **Members were asked how measure the success and failure of the outcomes of the review? They agreed that the check for this is young people themselves. There should be robust analysis on the product to include social impact reports and KPI's. pivotal to this should be less silo working and more partnership working.**
- 6) **Members commented that once a new service is provided, the measure of success will be how much people get involved. Additionally, bad feedback should not be a measure of failure.**

19 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Committee Members considered the Work Programme for 2019-2020. The Committee, in co-operation with the other three Overview and Scrutiny Committees, were responsible for proposing and delivering an annual Scrutiny Work Programme. The Work Programme was to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the Wirral Plan pledges which were within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the updated Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2019/20 be approved.