



Children, Young People & Education Committee

Date:	Monday, 13 September 2021
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	The Floral Pavilion, New Brighton

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AGENDA

Members of the public are encouraged to view the meeting via the webcast (see below), but for anyone who would like to attend in person, seating is limited therefore please contact us in advance of the meeting if you would like to reserve a seat. All those attending will be asked to wear a face covering (unless exempt) and are encouraged to take a Lateral Flow Test before attending. You should not attend if you have tested positive for Coronavirus or if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus

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

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

- 4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 12)**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held 15 June 2021.

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Public Questions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Wednesday 8 September to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10

Statements and Petitions

Statements

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, 8 September 2021 to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.

Petitions

Petitions may be presented to the Committee. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding one minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. Please give notice of petitions to committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Questions by Members

Questions by Members to dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - DECISIONS

- 6. WIRRAL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-22 (Pages 13 - 78)**
- 7. WIRRAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2024 (Pages 79 - 102)**

SECTION B - BUDGET REPORTS

- 8. BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 1 (Pages 103 - 112)**

SECTION C - PERFORMANCE REPORTS

- 9. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT (Pages 113 - 126)**

SECTION D - REVIEWS/ REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

- 10. OVERVIEW OF 2019/20 COUNCIL LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE
ADULT EDUCATION DELIVERY (Pages 127 - 134)**
- 11. ESENTIAL UPDATE (Pages 135 - 160)**
- 12. THE PROVISION OF FOOD & ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN IN
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC –
WORKING GROUP UPDATE (Pages 161 - 166)**
- 13. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 167 - 174)**

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 15 June 2021

Present: Councillor W Clements (Chair)

Councillors M Booth C Cooke
D Brennan AER Jones (In
K Cannon place of S Frost)
C Carubia Cherry Povall
H Collinson P Stuart
A Wright

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed Members, Officers and members of the public to the first meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Samantha Frost and Julie Johnson (Co-opted Member).

3 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and, if so, declare and state what they were.

The following declarations were made:

Councillor Cherry Povall	Personal interest as member of the Wirral Fostering Panel.
Councillor Paul Stuart	Personal interest by virtue of he and his wife being Local Authority foster carers.
Councillor Helen Collinson	Personal interest as Chair of Governors at St Peter's and by virtue of employment for an alternative provision service for children excluded from school.
Councillor Adrian Jones	Personal interest as a governor of Oldershaw School and his daughters

	employment as a teacher.
Councillor Chris Carubia	Personal interest as Chair of Governors at a Primary School.
Councillor Chris Cooke	Personal interest as a Governor of a Primary School.
Councillor Wendy Clements	Personal interest as a Governor of Greasby Junior School.

4 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021 be agreed.

5 **PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

The Head of Legal Services informed the Children, Young People and Education Committee that no public questions, requests to make a statement or petitions had been submitted.

6 **PREVENTION**

Elizabeth Hartley, Assistant Director: Early Help and Prevention introduced the report of the Director for Children, Families and Education, which provided the Committee with an overview of the prevention approach recommended for adoption, including a Prevention Policy Statement and Prevention Framework. In addition, the report detailed the Breaking the Cycle programme, which sought to demonstrate how a collaboration of preventative activity could maximise opportunity and lead to better outcomes for people, services, and organisations.

It was reported that the Prevention Policy Statement was intended to make a clear commitment from the Council to early intervention and prevention, whilst the framework provided structure and guidance on taking preventative approaches, defining the different levels of prevention and setting out 6 foundations for preventative approaches, these were:

- Strategic Leadership
- Place-based Approach
- Strengths-based Approach
- Equity
- Whole-system Approach
- Co-production

The intention was to create a suite of preventative programmes, one of which was the Breaking the Cycle programme which was presented to the Committee. The programme intended to bring together a range of

interventions working towards similar outcomes, and would work with people dealing with deprivation factors associated with deprivation such as drug abuse and risk of homelessness to give them priority access to catalyst projects, and eventually would be used to ask wider agencies to work differently with this cohort of people to provide support in a more suitable way.

Members expressed significant support for the approach and sought further clarity on the source of the funding. The Assistant Director: Early Help and Intervention informed the Committee that the Council had been successful in funding bids over a number of years, and that this workstream pulled together those different strands of work to maximise their effectiveness.

Resolved – That Policy and Resources be recommended to:

- 1) Approve the Prevention Policy Statement and Prevention Framework.**
- 2) Endorse the Breaking the Cycle programme approach.**

7 YOUTH OFFER

Elizabeth Hartley, Assistant Director: Early Help and Prevention introduced the report of the Director for Children, Families and Education providing the Committee with an overview of proposals to implement an equitable, consistent, branded, neighbourhood youth offer for universal, open access provision.

Members were reminded that in Summer 2019 a review of youth provision in Wirral took place, including a consultation in which approximately 3,000 young people took part. A report went to Cabinet in February 2020 where four proposals were approved, the fifth proposal relating to the delivery of youth clubs being deferred for further development, and the report before the Committee presented the revised arrangements for youth clubs for approval.

The report detailed the current youth offer and outlined the strengths of the offer which would be retained in the new model including a mixed economy of provision and a qualified and experienced workforce. The report also detailed the weaknesses of the current that the new offer would need to overcome including an inequitable offer across the borough, impact of staff absence on delivery and lack of consistent brand and quality assurance. Details of the proposed new offer were presented to the committee, which would use the neighbourhood model to provide a consistent offer, developing a service brand and set of standards with young people, using a quality assurance framework to ensure consistency, and introducing a set of key performance indicators for collective impact.

The committee considered several elements within the offer including the Hive outreach work and the role of the Neighbourhood Youth Workers. It was queried whether the offer had been tested with young people to see if would meet their needs, and it was confirmed that the Young People's Action Group had been engaged during the development of the proposals and were supportive of the approach.

Resolved – That delegated authority be given to the Director of Children's Services to carry out actions for the delivery of a universal, open access youth provision as set out in Paragraph 3.6, 3.16, 3.18 and Appendix 2 to the report.

8 CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Anne-Marie Carney, Children's Commissioning Manager introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education, which sought agreement in principle to invest up to £1m by way of a loan to the organisation identified in the exempt appendix to the report to develop children's residential accommodation in Wirral.

The Committee was reminded that in March 2019 the Children Looked After Sufficiency Strategy was adopted which prioritised the increase in placement provision within Wirral. The need to do so was driven by a number of factors which the report outlined, these included:

- Rising numbers of Children Looked After
- Escalating costs as demand exceeded supply
- Mixed quality of current provision
- Inward-facing market reducing the Council's ability to procure local placements for children
- Lack of sufficiency within the market
- Increase in private provision and use of growth acquisition models across the sector

The different options considered to tackle this were outlined to the Committee. It was acknowledged that doing nothing was not an option due to the unsustainability of the current market. Other options included commissioning an external provider to provide services in Council-owned property, which was discounted due to lack of appropriate accommodation and lack of interest from providers to deliver a service without the associated asset, and a further option was to enter into a joint venture with a service provider, which was also discounted due to it being a technical and time-consuming process which was not warranted given the level of investment proposed. The report detailed other options that had also been considered and discounted.

The proposal put to the Committee was to agree in principle to invest up to £1m by way of a loan on commercial terms to the organisation identified in the

exempt appendix, who had set out an ambitious proposal to set up a new social enterprise that would create a new ethical, sustainable network of residential care homes that significantly improved the life chances of children living in care. The loan would be used to support the organisation to provide initial rental allocation or purchase property, enable recruitment and secure access onto the North West Flexible Purchasing Scheme.

Members welcomed the approach but queried the need to agree to the approach in principle prior to due diligence being undertaken. Officers advised that the item was before Committee for agreement in principle to ensure that members were agreeable to the approach before officers undertook further work, and to give the provider in discussion with the Council assurances that they would receive funding, should they become the chosen provider. Members further queried whether it was necessary for the recommendation in the report to tie the Council to one specific provider.

It was moved by Councillor Kate Cannon and seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart, that recommendation 1 in the report be amended to read:

‘That agreement be given in principle to invest up to £1m by way of a loan on commercial terms to enable the development of children’s homes within Wirral for children looked after.’

The motion was put and carried unanimously. It was therefore –

Resolved – That

- 1) agreement be given in principle to invest up to £1m by way of a loan on commercial terms to enable the development of children’s homes within Wirral for children looked after.**
- 2) the Director of Children, Families and Education be requested to bring a further report to Committee after due diligence had been completed in respect of the proposals set out in the report.**

9 SEND SERVICE UPDATE

James Backhouse, Assistant Director of Education introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided an update on the Special Education Needs and Disabilities services that supported young people in education.

The Committee was reminded that at its meeting in December 2020, it approved the SEND Strategy 2020-2024 and the subsequent SEND Improvement Plan aimed at addressed concerns with the service. The report detailed actions that were being taken as part of that plan, these included:

- Recruitment of staff in the SEND assessment team to ensure completion of Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments within the statutory 20-week timeframe.
- A review of provision for young people requiring Special School placements for September 2021, with additional capacity being agreed to sustain the additional demand.
- Short-term placements and additional long-term recruitment processes taking place to address the staff shortages being faced nationally in Educational Psychology, which were resulting in challenges in delivering assessments within the relevant time frame.

Members raised several concerns including the number of EHCP assessments taking place outside of the statutory timescales and sought further information on the outcomes of tribunals relating to children with SEND. A further discussion was had around the number of children requiring EHCPs and whether there was any benchmarking data that could be provided to committee. Further clarity was sought on the short-term solutions to address the capacity challenges in the Education Psychology team, where officers confirmed that locum support had been recruited and greater links had been made with the university for additional trainees.

It was moved by Councillor Wendy Clements, seconded by Councillor Kate Cannon, that –

“Having received the service update, the Children, Young People and Education Committee expresses its deep concern regarding the current position of the SEND service and the impact that this has upon families and children. The Committee requests a further update in three months on progress towards completing Education Health and Care Plan assessments within the statutory timeframe, seeking evidence of progress in this vital and statutory service for those Wirral families who need it.”

The motion was put and carried unanimously. It was therefore –

Resolved – That having received the service update, the Children, Young People and Education Committee expresses its deep concern regarding the current position of the SEND service and the impact that this has upon families and children. The Committee requests a further update in three months on progress towards completing Education Health and Care Plan assessments within the statutory timeframe, seeking evidence of progress in this vital and statutory service for those Wirral families who need it.

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services introduced the report which enabled the committee to appoint members and named deputies to serve on statutory and advisory committees and working parties for 2021/22 Municipal Year.

It was reported that Cllr Chris Cooke had indicated a wish to be a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel and therefore the committee would need to agree to increase the membership from 5 to 7 to ensure it remained politically proportionate.

It was proposed by Councillor Wendy Clements, seconded by Councillor Kate Cannon that the membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel be increased to 7. The motion was put and carried unanimously. It was therefore –

Resolved – That

- 1) the Monitoring Officer as proper officer be authorised to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Statutory and Advisory Committees listed in the report and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.**
- 2) the current constitution and membership of the School Appeals Panel be noted.**
- 3) the membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel be increased to 7 members.**

11 2021/22 BUDGET MONITORING AND 22/23 BUDGET PROCESS

Simone White, Director of Children, Families and Education introduced the report of the Director of Resources which outlined the processes for monitoring the 2021/22 budget and for commencing the budget setting process for 2022/23.

It was reported that following the capitalisation directive of up to £10.7m the Council had received from Ministry for Housing, Local Government and Communities, one of the conditions of that offer was that the Council needed to provide evidence from the assurance review of the authority's financial position and its ability to meet any or all of the identified budget gap without any additional borrowing. Therefore, it was important that the Council had robust processes in place to manage and monitor the in-year financial position, to ensure it is reporting a forecast balanced position to the end of the year and that the process for 2022/23 budget setting was underway early so that an agreed budget could be agreed by Council in March 2022.

Members acknowledged that the Policy and Resources Committee had resolved to pilot zero based budgeting in Adult Social Care and Public Health, but it was queried whether there was scope to undertake the preliminary zero-based budgeting without taking part in the pilot. It was confirmed that the principles of zero-based budgeting would be adopted to ensure that funding was taken away from areas where there were savings to be made and directed to areas with cost pressures.

Resolved – That

- 1) the content of the report and the current forecast position of savings for 2021/22 and the ongoing work being undertaken to mitigate any under-achievement be noted.**
- 2) the current proposals within this report from the Medium Term Financial Plan from 2022/23 – 2025/26 and the Director of Children be agreed for the Families and Education to develop them into full business cases, where appropriate, for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget proposals to Policy and Resources Committee at its October meeting for approval.**
- 3) a series of budget workshops be convened to identify any alternative savings/income/reductions in pressures to ensure that a full suite of costed and deliverable proposals can be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee at its October meeting for approval.**

12 CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 4 (APRIL - MARCH 2021)

Steven Prytherch, Senior Finance Business Partner, introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which set out the budget performance for Children, Young People and Education and the projected year-end revenue position as reported at Q4 2020/21, which was reported as a favourable position of £1.476m and a favourable capital position of £2.8m.

The report detailed the reasons for the position, where it was outlined that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in one-off actions and funding which had positively impacted on the position. It was further reported that within the Dedicated Schools Grant there was an adverse variance in the High Needs Block of £1.373m due to additional demand in both volume and complexity, but that the favourable position in the early years budget due to reduction in attendance had offset the shortfall in the Dedicated Schools Block. The report further detailed the favourable position in the Capital Budget, where it was explained that it was due to a delay in school improvements due to Covid-19 and the underspend would be rolled over into the next financial year when work could proceed.

Members considered the various underspends and overspends within the overall budget. It was acknowledged that some of the underspends were due to the humanitarian efforts to support families during the pandemic which it was felt highlighted the importance and positive outcomes of a preventative approach.

Resolved – That the projected year-end revenue forecast position of £1.476m favourable and the capital position of £2.8m favourable, as reported at quarter 4 (April-March) of 2020-21 be noted.

13 **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

Simone White, Director of Children, Families and Education introduced the report, which set out a revised performance monitoring and reporting framework for the Committee. The new approach had been designed in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokes, aiming to deliver an open, honest and transparent performance framework that would allow Committee Members to effectively challenge performance and support decision-making.

It was reported that the focus was on reporting performance information relating to child social care, but that there was a need to understand other parts of the system to ensure that members could have a wider oversight on all performance information affecting children and families. It was hoped that the new PowerBI technology would allow members to be able to look at the headlines at both Wirral and ward level, and then drill down into the underlying data. Therefore, the report was intended as an interim report to introduce the new system to members.

Members discussed a wide range of data including that relating to Independent Reviewing Officers Caseloads and Escalations alongside turnover of social service staff. Further information on national benchmarking of performance data and missing episodes were requested.

Resolved – That

- 1) the report be noted and the work completed to date as well as the next steps involved in developing a robust performance monitoring framework that encompasses all aspects of Children's Services be acknowledged.**
- 2) the proposed clusters of performance indicators in Appendix A be agreed.**
- 3) the delivery of Performance Management Workshops during the summer where elected Members would receive training on the Council's business intelligence system including how to access**

and navigate around real-time data reports be agreed.

4) the content of the databook in Appendix C be noted.

14 FOSTERING AND ADOPTION ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT. REPORTING PERIOD 1 APRIL 2020 – 31ST MARCH 2021

Nabeel Chaudhry, Head of Integrated Provision introduce the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided an overview of fostering and adoption performance during the financial year of 2020 – 2021 and how this linked to the Council’s children looked after ‘sufficiency duties’.

Members were advised that a key priority for Children’s Services was for Children Looked After to be living in family-based settings, most notably foster placements. At the end of the reporting period (31st March 2021), 59% of children were living in local authority ‘in-house’ foster placements. Overall, 71% of children were living in foster placements taking into account 12% of those in placed with private fostering agencies. The Committee was further advised of the success in recruiting 12 new fostering households, alongside the successful marketing campaign in late 2020 which resulted in an increase in enquiries resulting in approvals of new foster carers. Overall, during the reporting period, 25 children had been adopted and a further 23 were placed with prospective adoptive families.

Members welcomed the figures and sought further information on the reasons why foster carers stopped providing care. The level of training provided was raised, where it was confirmed that each carer had an individual training and personal development plan which compliance with was a key requirement of them being a carer.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

15 WORK PROGRAMME

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

Members acknowledged that work had already been undertaken on the healthy weight agenda and suggested it be removed from the work programme. It was further suggested that a report on the impact of the pandemic on job prospects for school leavers be added to the work programme.

Resolved – That

- 1) the proposed work programme be noted.
- 2) the Healthy Weight item be removed from the work programme.
- 3) the working group for the provision of food and activities in school holidays during the Covid-19 pandemic be re-established.
- 4) Councillors Cherry Povall, Chris Carubia and Moira McLaughlin be appointed to remain on the working group for the provision of food and activities in school holidays during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5) the Monitoring Officer as proper officer be authorise to carry out the wishes of the Labour Group leader in allocating a Labour member to the working group for the provision of food and activities in school holidays during the Covid-19 pandemic.

16 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved – That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves 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.

17 **CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

Resolved – That the content of the exempt appendix be noted.

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 September 2021

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-22
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an introduction to the Wirral Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021-22.

The Wirral Youth Justice Service's Strategic Plan 2021-22 is Wirral's 'Annual Plan' in Youth Justice Board (YJB) context. The Youth Justice Board is a non-departmental public body for overseeing the youth justice system in England and Wales. The preparation and submission of an 'Annual Plan' is linked to the terms and conditions of the Youth Justice Board grant award, this award contributes to the funding of youth offending teams and services across England and Wales.

A refreshed five-year Wirral Plan has been developed, setting out the Council's priorities and how we will transform the way services are provided between 2021 and 2026. The Wirral Plan's vision of 'Equity for People and Place', seeks to secure the best future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services.

The Wirral Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2021-22 links to the Wirral 2021-2026 Plan against delivery of the following:

- Brighter futures for all regardless of their background.
- Safe and pleasant communities that our residents are proud of.
- Active and healthy lives for all, with the right care, at the right time to enable residents to live longer and healthier lives.

This matter affects residents across the borough.

This report relates to a key decision

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Wirral Youth Justice Service's Strategic Plan 2021-22, and recommend to council for approval
2. Note the approach and ongoing development work within the Youth Justice Service and across the Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Wirral Youth Justice Service is a statutory partnership between Police, Probation, the Local Authority and Health partners in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The aim of the partnership is to prevent offending and re-offending by children and to tackle it effectively through a range of measures when it does occur.
- 1.2 Section 39 (1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the co-operation of the named statutory partners to form a YOT (Known as the 'Youth Justice Service' – 'YJS' in Wirral). Section 38 identifies the statutory partners and places upon them a duty to co-operate to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area. These statutory partners are:
- The Local Authority.
 - Police.
 - Probation service.
 - Health.

To support the YOT (YJS), additional partners may also be recruited to the joint strategic effort to prevent offending by children and young people.

- 1.3 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice (YJ) plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth offending partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The Wirral Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021-22 is the annual plan for 2021-22 for the purposes of the legislation.
- 1.4 The Youth Justice Service is overseen by the Wirral Youth Justice Management Board. The management board should be formed to provide strategic direction with the aim of preventing offending by children and young people.
- 1.5 The primary duty to ensure a YOT (YJS) is in place rests with the local authority.
- 1.6 As a statutory partner under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Wirral Local Authority has key role to play in delivering Youth Justice. The endorsement of the Children, Young People and Education Committee will support the delivery of this Strategic Plan and therefore the linked aspects of The Wirral Plan 2021-26.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Not supporting the Wirral Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021-22 may result in less clearly aligned and coordinated multi agency activity to prevent offending and re-offending. The lack of an 'Annual Plan' would be contrary to Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) is the primary inspectorate for Youth Offending Teams (The Youth Justice Service in Wirral). The HMIPs Annual Report 2019/20 included the below reference, which helps to set the challenges for YOTs in context as to their wider partnership and professional relationships.

“YOTs must successfully straddle the criminal justice system and children's and wider youth services to meet the multiple needs of children, whilst protecting the public and recognising the needs and wishes of victims”.

- 3.2 In July 2020, the Youth Justice Service moved from the Council's Neighbourhood Directorate into Children's Services. Prior to this, YJS was part of the Police-led, Safer Wirral Hub, community safety initiative. Following consideration by the Council's Senior Leadership Team, the Director of Children's Services secured agreement for the service to be moved into the Children, Young People and Education Directorate. This move has supported the vision for a Child First approach to youth justice, generating closer working relationships across children's services as part of the Contextual Safeguarding service area, and working within the scope of the safeguarding partnership's Safer Adolescence Strategy 2021-2023.
- 3.3 The move to Children's Services presented an opportunity to refresh the Youth Justice Management Board. The board now benefits from several new members, who have worked through board development and self-assessment sessions, alongside considering core business and performance, to build their knowledge base and understanding of the youth justice arena. Youth Justice can be a complex area of business to navigate. The board are well supported in their development journey by an experienced Youth Justice Service Manager and business manager, youth justice managers and staff have contributed to the board development and agenda items by means of reports, updates and case studies

The role of the Management Board is to:

- Determine how the YOT(s) (YJS) is to be composed and funded, how it is to operate and what functions it is to carry out.
- Oversee the formulation each year of a draft youth justice plan.
- Oversee the appointment or designation of a YOT (YJS) manager.
- As part of the youth justice plan, agree objectives and key performance indicators.

- 3.4 The Wirral Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021-22 is the Youth Justice Management Board's first cycle of planning as a new board and post covid. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) ordinarily set a target date at the end of September to complete the Annual Plan, however this year the target date for submission to the Youth Justice Board was the 30th of June 2021.
- 3.5 The Strategic Plan aims to contribute to the wider Corporate and Directorate objectives by providing an efficient service that prevents and diverts young people away from criminal justice, intervenes effectively to prevent re-offending and reduces the use of custody for young people. Effective and committed partnership working

will ensure local delivery effectively meets targets and achieves positive outcomes for the young people, families, victims, and the wider community in Wirral.

3.6 In setting the direction for Youth Justice in Wirral, the Youth Justice Management Board has developed the following strategic vision.

- For our young people involved, or on the cusp of, the Criminal Justice System are seen as “Children First, Offenders Second”.
- For our young people to be treated fairly by the youth justice system; and receive help that recognises their individual needs and builds on their strengths, through statutory work or preventative support.
- To bring about change for our young people and their families, so they can contribute fully to society and live a brighter future, in safe and pleasant communities.

3.7 Priorities

The Youth Justice Board sets out 3 National areas of key performance for all YOTs. This affords the Youth Justice Board and Youth Justice Management Boards the opportunity to benchmark across Merseyside, North West, England and statistical neighbours. These national indicators are:

- The amount and rate of First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTEs).
- The rate Re-offending.
- The use of custody (Use of youth custody as opposed to managing young people in the community).

3.8 Wirral performance in respect of the 3 national indicators is set out at section 5 of the Strategic Plan. This is accompanied by a more detailed explanation as to how the statistics are produced and tracked over time. Appendix 7 within the Strategic Plan reflects a positive direction of travel for Wirral against the 3 national indicators, for the year ending March 2021. Comparison across Merseyside is also favourable. The rate of first time entrants and use of custody for Wirral is higher than that of the YOT ‘family’ average, as presented by the Youth Justice Board. The YOT family is grouped together by virtue of the Department for Education’s Children’s Services Statistical Neighbour Benchmarking model. There are 11 YOT (YJS) within the benchmarking family. For 2020-21:

- First time entrants’ rate was 219 per 100,000 children compared to 155 per 100,000 YOT family average. Two YOT’s within the family had higher rates than Wirral.
- Use of custody was 0.07 per 1000 children, compared to 0.04 per 1000 YOT family average. Of the 4 other YOTs presenting use of custody rates, 3 had higher rates than Wirral.

3.9 Section 5 of the Strategic Plan includes an overview of the cohort of young people known to youth justice over the last year. This, along with scanning national developments and themes from the youth justice sector, considering data and

feedback from children's services, health and police, informs the priorities the Youth Justice Management Board have set for 2021-22. The following paragraphs set out local areas of priority focus for Wirral, in addition to the national indicators.

- 3.10 **Child to Adult Violence (CAV):**
Wirral has identified the development of the service offered to parents whose children are violent towards them, to extend the offer by working with colleagues from outside the Youth Justice Service using the "who's in charge" model of support. With the end goal the development of a parenting support group that is ran and managed by parents who have been through the programme. CAV was a feature within the HMIP annual Report 2020 as a feature of lockdown periods, where children were spending more time at home.
- 3.11 **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**
The Youth Justice Service will continue to deliver workshops for front line staff on Harmful Sexual Behaviour through the Safeguarding Partnership's training programme. This will ensure that front line staff are 'risk aware' when working with young people who display sexualised behaviour. Professionals will be given the knowledge and strategies to work with young people with such behaviours. Pathways and referral processes are in place for those young people that do need additional specialist support and risk management. This area has been highlighted by the recent 'Everyone's Invited' campaign and the Ofsted rapid review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges 2021.
- 3.12 **Trauma Informed Practice and Enhanced Case Management.**
The Youth Justice Service are in the process of delivering a programme of training for case managers and associated professionals, to ensure that staff can recognise and understand Trauma and behaviours. This will equip staff with the tools and knowledge to engage and work with young people who may have been affected by trauma. The Youth Justice Service will identify young people to work with in the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) framework, ensuring that they are supported throughout the intervention. This includes those agencies and professionals involved with the young person. This priority reflects the smaller cohorts with increased complexity across the youth justice landscape nationally.
- 3.13 **Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation**
The Youth Justice Service and management board will work alongside Community Safety Partners and Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership to maintain a focus on violence and exploitation within the context of the YJS. Making best use of problem solving, contextual safeguarding and public health approaches. This was a theme highlighted within the HMIP Annual Report 2020; and the focus of recent learning and development engagement by the Department for Education, linking violence reduction partnership, community safety and safeguarding partnership activity. Wirral's Community Safety Strategy, developed in 2021, includes a 'Youth Interest Group' which will assist in aligning child focused community safety activity and priorities across the Wirral.
- 3.14 **Education, Employment and Training**
This priority area seeks to ensure young people open to the Youth Justice Service who are aged 16 and above have the opportunity of Employment, Education and

Training (EET). Engagement in this context reduces vulnerability and helps build capacity within young people, reducing the likelihood of offending or re-offending.

3.15 Education

This priority seeks to ensure there is a focus for those of school age within the cohort to have access to education. This priority has been drawn from data analysis by the YJMB and is a feature within the HMIP Annual Report 2020. As with those who are no longer of compulsory school age, engagement with education reduces vulnerability and help build capacity in our young people.

3.16 Participation and Engagement

The Youth Justice Service and management board want to increase young people's involvement and participation to ensure the service provision meets their needs. This area was highlighted in self-assessment undertaken by Wirral's YJMB in 2021. The service has appointed a participation and engagement lead who will link to the wider Children's Service's network of participation and engagement.

3.17 Mental Health Support

The provision of specialist mental health consultation support for young people open to the service will remain a priority for 2021-22. Youth Justice case managers identifying any concerns with regards to the young person's mental health and wellbeing have access to consultation with the aligned Youth Justice CAMH's worker.

3.18 Prevention support for vulnerable cohorts

This priority area seeks to increase prevention activity/support for our looked after and vulnerable children. This priority is drawn from data analysis by Wirral on the amount of prevention referrals received for looked after children and links to the overarching Safer Adolescence Strategy in terms of adopting a more proactive approach to protecting older children.

3.19 Section 7 of the Strategic Plan sets out the areas for improvement and development over the period of the plan. Improvement areas include how the Youth Justice Management Board will continue to develop, the introduction of Equality Objectives and an Equality Statement covering the work of Youth Justice to ensure fairness and a personal approach; and how the service will continue to work to the 'standards for children in the justice system' set out by the Youth Justice Board.

3.20 The improvement plan also includes the Wirral response to peer feedback around high risk 'resettlement' cases, where young people went on to re-offend. The peer feedback was sought from a neighbouring YOT to gain objective and independent youth justice input and maximise learning for Wirral. A specific action plan was presented to the Youth Justice Management Board in July 2021, including the review of linked local policies and a multi-agency task and finish group being approved to develop wider partnership practice in this area.

3.21 The Youth Justice Service have an operational plan supporting the 2021-22 Strategic Plan. The service has also developed an accompanying Performance Framework linked to priority areas. This will in turn inform the performance reporting into the Youth Justice management Board across the period of the Strategic Plan.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Wirral YJS Strategic Plan sets out the budget for 2021-22. This is drawn from local authority and statutory partners contributions through direct payment or the commitment of resources as 'in kind' payments. (See Appendix 1 of the Strategic Plan). The Local Authority contribution remains the same as the last financial year. Vacancies within the Youth Justice Service during the Covid affected period, aligned with a hold on non-essential recruitment resulted in an underspend for the end of 2020-21. A recent recruitment exercise for a team manager vacancy has been approved and undertaken, with the candidate joining from a neighbouring YOT in Quarter 3 2021-22. Vacancies in respect of two case manager roles have yet to be directly recruited into as the service has savings targets of £25k in both 21/22 and 22/23 and £50k in 23/24. Wirral's Youth Justice Management Board are seeking to evaluate the impact of Covid on young people's needs; and consider options for a service model that supports changing national trends around cohort complexity and a general national youth justice move towards evidence-based trauma informed models of support.
- 4.2 The Youth Justice Service receives a remand grant award from the Ministry of Justice. This award for 2020-21 did not meet all of the remand costs during that period, with the remainder falling to the Local Authority. This cost to the Local Authority, however, was less than in previous years due to an uplift in remand grant during 2020-21. This is due to the award being adjusted according to analysis of local demand over a period of time. The award has been confirmed for 2021-22, remaining at the higher level set within 2020-21. Costs incurred from remand are listed within the risks section of the Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan (Section 9), with ongoing monitoring through management governance and the Youth Justice Management Board.
- 4.3 The Youth Justice Board grant has been increased for 2021-22. This additional award is to support YOTs nationally with responding to Covid impact. Wirral has undertaken additional training in respect of trauma and child to adult violence, to assist in managing young people with complex needs; and is targeting the development of the facilities for young people within Solar Campus to support more effective engagement in 2021-22 and beyond.
- 4.4 The current financial pressures are noted as a relevant risk within section 7 of this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As per section 1, above, there is a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to form a Youth Justice Service and Youth Justice Management Board and submit an annual plan.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Strategic Plan references a broad range of activity delivered in the context of youth justice in Wirral. As part of the Youth Justice Management Board arrangements, the board will retain an overview of any changes to partnership structures, assets and activities that may impact on service delivery around those activities and services highlighted within the plan.
- 6.2 Changes to the structure of the YJS in Wirral will only be undertaken through report and approval to the Youth Justice Management Board, taking into account local need, cost benefit and considering other options.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failing to deliver the Strategic Plan will be mitigated through management oversight and Youth Justice Management Board arrangements for monitoring performance and delivery.
- 7.2 The current financial pressures facing the Council and its partners represents a risk. Considerations on changes to any future funding arrangements will include cost-benefit analysis, including invest to save considerations.
- 7.3 Risks in the context of service delivery, and accompanying mitigation, are set out in Section 9 of the Strategic Plan.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation has taken place with young people in Wirral, to help understand their experiences of youth justice. Section 6 of the Strategic Plan includes direct quotes from our young people.
- 8.2 Feedback in developing the 'Children First' version of the Strategic Plan has been gathered through the partnership's participation and engagement network, this included direct feedback from young people involved with Youth Justice.
- 8.3 Members of the Youth Justice Management Board and Community Safety Partnership have been consulted with during the development of the Strategic Plan.
- 8.4 The priorities as set out in Section 3 of this report, and Section 5 of the Strategic Plan highlight the ongoing commitment to participation and engagement across young people, victims and carers linked to the work of Wirral's Youth Justice Service.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the Wirral Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021-22 and can be found via the following link:

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

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental and climate implications arising from this report. It is anticipated that the Strategic Plan will have no impact on the emission of greenhouse gases.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Wirral Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021-22
Appendix 2 – Wirral Youth Justice Service ‘Children First’ Plan 2021-22

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Covid Recovery Plan 2020-21.
Youth Justice Management Board Terms of Reference April 2021.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Not applicable	Not applicable



2021 - 2022

STRATEGIC YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN WIRRAL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

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Foreword

This has been an extraordinary year for all of us, and whilst working with fellow members of the Youth Justice Management Board to develop this strategic plan, we have reflected on both the challenges of the past 12 months and on our collective achievements. We pay tribute to the individuals, teams and services that have worked on behalf of our young people to prioritise their safety, maintain wherever possible business-as-usual, and continue to work in their best interest throughout unprecedented times. We know from both local and national surveys that the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown periods were particularly hard for young people, that their daily lives and normal opportunities have been significantly impacted. As Chair of the Youth Justice Management Board, I have been impressed and inspired by those practitioners and services who throughout the year have kept the young person at the centre of their work.

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic was not the only new experience for the Youth Justice Management Board and Youth Justice Service. At the time of publishing our previous plan for Covid Response, services had only recently transferred from the Council's Neighbourhoods Directorate into Children's Services. In hindsight, this transition was fortuitous, not only as it strengthened working practice with the Contextual Safeguarding Service, but it enhanced oversight and collaboration with wider Children's Social Care teams as we worked together to support those identified as vulnerable throughout lockdown. This included establishing a Vulnerable Children Panel and CME25 Group (Children Missing Education), which have supported young people in accessing education during this period.

The Youth Justice Management Board, which was refreshed following the transition, has benefitted from several new members who have been eager to learn and grow into their role. It has been a pleasure to work with our new board, who are asking lots of questions, making links between the work of the board and their own agencies, and supporting each other to better understand the functions of the wider system. I am excited by our potential, as a growing partnership, to deter young people from crime and to ensure that those who do enter the criminal justice system are given the right support, encouragement, and opportunity to change and achieve their best possible outcomes. Our board is committed to a 'child-first' approach.

As a Youth Justice Service and a partnership, we are learning, and we have benefitted from the case studies shared by practitioners, feedback from young people, and the experience of other local authorities and thematic experts. We are committed to creating a culture of openness, transparency, and continuous improvement. This strategic plan outlines our challenges, risks, and issues, and we are motivated to meet those. Over the next 12 months we will continue to be proactive in seeking learning and expertise, we will continue to strengthen our quality assurance processes as board members exercise their roles as National Standard Leads.

We anticipate that the next year will be an exciting and busy period. Wirral Council and Partnership for Children, Young People and Families, have adopted a Policy Statement and Framework for Prevention, which commits to working with residents at the earliest possible opportunity. We intend to use this to benefit Youth Justice Services by strengthening our prevention approach with links to the new Youth Offer, innovative Breaking the Cycle programme, and Safer Adolescence Strategy. We are proud of our achievements in working towards Enhanced Case Management and that the experiences of the Youth Justice Service are influencing the borough-wide approach to understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences and delivering Trauma Informed Practice.

This Strategic Youth Justice Annual Plan outlines our commitment to delivering high-quality, value-for-money services that deliver better outcomes for children and young people in Wirral and is a forward step in our ambition of equity and inclusion for all.

I look forward to working with young people, partners, and the Youth Justice Management Board over the coming months- together we will secure brighter futures for our children and young people.

Elizabeth Hartley
Chair: Wirral Youth Justice Management Board

1. Introduction

Each Local Authority is required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to have a Youth Justice Plan that sets out how local Youth Justice Services will be delivered within the available resources. This document sets out our strategy, plans and priorities for 2021-2022, which directly aims to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people.

In preparing this plan, cognisance has been taken of the Youth Justice Board Strategic Plan 2021-2024. In considering priorities and key performance focus, regard has been taken of the HMIP Annual Report 2020, The Wirral Plan, and linked strategies as per Sections 2 and 5 of this document.

Strategic Vision

Wirral Youth Justice Vision Statement

- For our young people involved, or on the cusp of, the Criminal Justice System are seen as “Children First, Offenders Second”.
- For our young people to be treated fairly by the youth justice system; and receive help that recognises their individual needs and builds on their strengths, through statutory work or preventative support.
- To bring about change for our young people and their families, so they can contribute fully to society and live a brighter future, in safe and pleasant communities.

Purpose and Aims

Wirral Youth Justice Service (YJS) is committed to contributing to a fair and effective Criminal Justice System whilst providing a quality service which is effective, efficient and value for money.

The overall purpose is to prevent young people offending but once in the Criminal Justice System to accurately assess and offer high quality interventions to young people to reduce crime and to protect victims (and support improving outcomes),

We aim to ensure that we will:

- Prevent offending and divert young people away from the Criminal Justice System.
- Reduce Re-offending.
- Reduce Custody rates.
- Improve sustainable outcomes for young people.
- Protect the public from the harm that young people can cause.
- Support victims.
- Work to ensure custody is limited only for those young people whose risk cannot be managed in the community.
- Promote the welfare and safety of children within the Criminal Justice System.

Principles

The principles underpinning our service are:

- Respect for young offenders as young people.
- Young people's view is integral to service provision.
- Regard for the safety of the public as a priority.
- Provision of a fair and equitable service to young people, parents/carers, staff, victims, and the wider community.
- Respect for diversity, respecting the needs and rights of victims, children, young people, and their families.
- Valuing staff as our most important resource.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Strategic Vision for Wirral Youth Justice aims '*For our young people to be treated fairly by the youth justice system; and receive help that recognises their individual needs and builds on their strengths, through statutory work or preventative support*'.

The public sector equality duty, set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies to address diversity and equality issues. In doing so, the Wirral YJS must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

As a Youth Justice Service, we must consider how the way we work and what we do can affect different groups in different ways. Unless we do this, we are unlikely to achieve our vision and can inadvertently contribute to greater inequality.

In delivering this aspect of the vision, Wirral Youth Justice has the following overarching Equality Objectives:

- To remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by children due to their protected characteristics.
- To take steps to meet the needs of children from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other children.
- To encourage children from protected groups to participate in ways that meet their needs.

The YJMB quarterly performance reports and dashboard data help identify themes linked to protected characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity and disability. Delivery of the Equality Objectives feature within the YJ Improvement Plan, at section 7. This information can then be used to ensure we continue to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2. The Wirral Plan

A refreshed five-year Wirral Plan has been developed to take account of the changed social and economic landscape due to the pandemic and to set out what the Council's priorities will be and how we will transform the way we provide services between 2021 - 2026.

The 2021-2026 Plan sets out the main areas of focus and activity against priorities that are realistic in the current local authority climate. Similarly, this plan takes into account the reduction in resources. The Wirral 2021-2026 Plan focuses on the delivery of the following:

- Brighter futures for all regardless of their background.
- Safe and pleasant communities that our residents are proud of
- Active and healthy lives for all, with the right care, at the right time to enable residents to live longer and healthier lives.
- A thriving and inclusive economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all
- A clean-energy, sustainable borough, leading the way in tackling the environment crisis.

The YJS Strategic Plan aims to contribute to the wider Corporate and Directorate objectives by providing an efficient service that prevents and diverts young people away from criminal justice, intervenes effectively to prevent re-offending and reduces the use of custody for young people. Effective and committed partnership working will ensure local delivery effectively meets targets and achieves positive outcomes for the young people, families, victims, and the wider community in Wirral.

The Youth Justice Service and Youth Justice Management Board are cognisant of linked strategies across the Community Safety Partnership (Safer Wirral Strategy) and the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Partnership's (WSCP) Safer Adolescence Strategy 2021-2023. Section 5 highlights the specific links to these forums. It has been the intention of the Youth Justice Management Board to strengthen strategic links and draw attention to the specific needs of young offenders wherever appropriate, including within the Early Help Strategy, development of the Youth Offer, the partnership domestic abuse strategy, and the Council-wide Prevention Framework. The Youth Justice Management Board has been purposeful in its participation in key working groups such as the Adverse Childhood Experience and Trauma Informed Practice Working Group.

3. Resources and Services

Wirral YJS continues to be funded by its statutory partners including the Council (Children's Services), Health, Police / PCC, and Probation. Contributions from Health, Police, Police Crime Commissioner and Probation 2021/22 contributions remain the same as the previous financial year. The Junior Attendance Centre Annual Grant from the Youth Justice Board has also been maintained for 2021/22.

We continue our partnership with Career Connect (formerly Connexions) with attached personnel in the service. The YJS continues to receive a financial Health contribution as well as

personnel from substance misuse services and a School Nurse who oversees the YJS Health Clinic. Wirral YJS have a CAMH's therapist based within the Service three days per week, as well as access to the Criminal Liaison Mental Health Team. Additionally, we have an Educational Psychologist based within the service for two and half days per week, who has taken a lead on our newly developing Trauma Lead Interventions.

Wirral YJS continues to comply with the minimum staffing requirements set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. We are privileged to still have a Prevention Service embedded within the Youth Justice Service which has had a positive impact on reducing First Time Entrants (FTEs) into the Criminal Justice System, year on year.

Wirral YJS also oversees the use of the Local Authority's budget provided to meet the cost of young people remanded to the secure estate, transferred under the provisions of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. The allocation received for 2020/21 was £85,213 which failed to meet the cost of all remands to the secure estate, additional costs fell to the YJS.

Should the period 2021/22 follow the same pattern as 2020/21 in terms of remand award and expenditure, the Youth Justice Service will need to meet these costs. At the time of writing this strategic plan the award for 2021/22 is yet to be confirmed.

In Table 1 'Partner Contributions to the Youth Offending Partnership Pooled Budget' (**Appendix 1**) shows the financial, staffing, and in-kind contributions made by local partners. In addition, Wirral YJS Structure chart (Staffing Chart 'B7 & B8' **Appendix 2**) highlights the staffing information in relation to organisation, gender and ethnicity.

All the Good Practice Grant will be spent on its intended use and Wirral YJS gives a commitment to using YJB allocation in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.

The Good Practice Grant is used specifically for the delivery of youth justice services including delivery of activities and effective specialist interventions such as Harmful Sexual Behaviour and the implementation of the Child to Adult Violence programme. The Service has continued to support their core duties as well as developing the wider priority key areas. This will support delivery of performance as set out in the Performance and Priorities Table at Page 24.

The Good Practice Grant also supports ongoing staff development for general development and responding to new themes and issues. This includes the Cross-Training Group (CTG) training plan for 2021/22 which was agreed by Greater Merseyside YOT Managers and recognises the refresher training and emerging training needs of YJS staff for the coming year and beyond. In addition, Wirral also has specific local issues and training plans which the Grant supports and various in-house training courses such as AIM training, Trauma training, working towards enhanced case management, Child to adult violence training Refresher PSR Training and Intervention training.

4. Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

Governance and Leadership

The Youth Justice Service is a statutory service, as required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to provide youth justice services as a statutory multi agency partnership between the Local Authority, Police, Probation and Health. Prior to July 2020, the YJS operated within the Neighbourhood Services Directorate of Wirral Council, at which point the YJS transitioned from Neighbourhood Services into the Children's Services Directorate, as part of the Contextual Safeguarding Service. The Contextual Safeguarding Service, which provides support for child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, children missing from home and placement, and detached youth work teams, was considered to be the most appropriate service area for youth justice. It was the intention of senior leadership to strengthen joint working across teams where issues were interconnected and co-dependent, and where the primary focus is on improving outcomes for children and young people.

The Contextual Safeguarding Service is part of Children's Service's Early Help and Prevention structure. Under the Assistant Director for Early Help & Prevention, the service sits alongside Early Childhood Services, Family Matters Services, Schools and Communities Service, and wider community-based youth and family support. The YJS within this context is strengthened through a consistent and appropriate network of services. As part of the Children's Services Directorate, the priorities of the YJS are meaningfully shared and included in the departmental performance reports that are subject to scrutiny from the Children, Young People and Education Committee. In accordance with this structural change, the Chief Executive of Wirral Council tasked the Assistant Director for Early Help & Prevention to Chair the YJB and to drive the effectiveness of the partnership.

The Senior Management structure for Wirral Council is attached as **Appendix 3**, and the Senior Management Structure of Children's Services in **Appendix 4**.

Moving the YJS to the Children's Services Directorate presented an opportunity to refresh the membership and undertake board development activities. This included workshop events, group reflections, 1:1 conversations, refreshing the Terms of Reference and undertaking self-assessment against the HMIP Domain 1 for governance and leadership. These activities have supported the new YJMB to get to know each other, their role, the business of YJS and to identify areas of strength and areas for development.

The strategic aims of the Wirral Youth Justice Service align to those of the National Youth Justice Board (YJB) and support those contained within the Wirral's Corporate Plan (Section 2). We aim to ensure that we have both the capacity and capability to achieve these aims by ensuring that all statutory partner agencies are strongly represented and actively engaged through the Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) at a senior level to provide strategic direction, supporting the YJS partnership to effectively prevent offending by children and young people and make a difference to the outcomes of children and young people who offend.

Wirral YJMB meets on a quarterly basis and in addition to statutory partners, has representatives from Merseyside Police, CAMHS, Wirral Youth Court, Youth Magistrates, Community Safety Partnership, Housing and CCG.

Appendix 5 references all of the current members of Wirral Youth Justice Board.

Responsibilities and Role of the WYJMB

- To provide leadership and oversight of youth justice services.
- To contribute to local multi-agency strategies and work with local and national criminal justice organisations.
- To safeguard children and young people who receive youth justice services.

To fulfil these responsibilities, the WYJMB will.

- Determine how the Youth Justice Service (sometimes referred to as the YOT) is to be composed and funded, how it is to operate and what functions it is to carry out.
- Oversee the formulation each year of a Youth Justice Plan (The Annual Plan).
- Oversee the appointment or designation of a Youth Justice Service Manager.
- As part of the Youth Justice Plan, agree measurable objectives linked to Key Performance Indicators, including the National Standards for Youth Justice.

Objectives

The WYJMB's overall objectives are to:

- Provide a strategic overview of the work of the Youth Justice Service, to include oversight of serious incidents.
- Promote positive outcomes in the context of the youth justice system and services to children and young people.
- Agree, monitor and review the implementation of the annual Youth Justice Plan and ensure co-ordination between the Youth Justice Plan and plans and strategies of partner agencies.
- Receive a structured analysis of performance and identify and monitor those measures where steps need to be taken to improve performance.
- Provide support and guidance to the Youth Justice Service to ensure it engages with local and national priorities, promotes race equality and maintains diversity.
- Agree an annual budget, including in-kind contributions and to provide support for additional targeted funding to meet identified and agreed need.
- Support, challenge and oversee the performance of the Youth Justice Service, provide strategic guidance and hold the Service Manager to account for the work of the Service, when necessary.
- Agree the form and structure of protocols, contracts and Service Level Agreements between the Youth Justice Service and partner agencies.
- Provide a forum for the discussion of community issues which impact upon or are affected by the work of the Youth Justice Service.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of Youth Justice information between partners and the Youth Justice Service, to promote a pro-active approach to partnership working.
- To review, monitor and evaluate service information to ensure that the Youth Justice Service is contributing to improving outcomes for children, young people and the community.

The YJMB continues to monitor performance. Wirral YJS Managers attend monthly team meetings and regular Planning Days where the quarterly data performance to the National Youth Justice Board is reviewed.

The YJMB meetings analyse performance data and ensure measures are put in place to either consolidate or improve on the existing performance achieved. Performance presentations to the YJMB will also now include recent inclusions to the YJB Good Practice Grant including timely submission of data, compliance with secure estate placement information, outcomes of National Standards Audits, as well as any outcomes from Critical Learning Reviews or Policy updates.

All board members contribute to the oversight of Wirral YJS to ensure effective partnerships are developed to make a difference to the outcomes of children and young people who offend, ensuring the YJS is sufficiently resourced to ensure quality interventions are provided to encourage strong engagement and sustainable outcomes.

The addition of thematic case manager led case studies at the quarterly YJMB has helped strengthen the connections between board members and case managers in Wirral. Case studies also ensure the business of the YJMB is grounded in considering the child's voice and impact on children and young people.

Partnership Arrangements

The YJMB has continued to place great emphasis on the role of strong partnership working and shared ownership of the youth justice performance targets. Wirral Youth Justice Service (YJS) is represented on all major strategic partnerships including the Community Safety Partnership (now reformed into Safer Wirral Partnership Board), Merseyside Community Safety Partnership, the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Group, DAAT, the Partnership for Children, Young People and Families, Domestic Abuse Alliance Partnership Board, and the Channel Panel for radicalisation/extremism.

A Merseyside YOT Manager sits on the Merseyside Criminal Justice Board (MCJB) and feeds back to the Pan Merseyside YOT Managers. The YJS Service Manager sits on the Youth Performance Improvement Group and leads on a number of MCJB workstreams including the Strategic Domestic Violence & Abuse Group and Youth Detention Scrutiny on behalf of Merseyside YOTs. The YJS Service Manager also attends the Community Safety Partnership Board and the Prevent & Channel Panel.

Within Wirral Council, the Assistant Director for Early Help & Prevention attends a wide range of strategic boards including Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive Board, Safer Wirral Partnership Board, Partnership for Children, Young People and Families, Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The post holder further ensures strong and effective stakeholder engagement and effective partnership working links and networks, which serve to strengthen and challenge the multi-agency working arrangements that support the YJS and contribute to improved outcomes and targets. Additionally, The Head of Service for Contextual Safeguarding who has oversight and direct line management of the Service Manager for Youth Justice and Youth Justice Service leads the Wirral Safeguarding Partnership Contextual Safeguarding Committee and has developed the safeguarding partnership's Safer Adolescence Strategy 2021/2023. This officer also co-chairs the local Multi Agency Child Exploitation panel, linking into Merseyside and regional forums for child exploitation, county lines and wider contextual safeguarding development.

Furthermore the Service Manager also attends the Greater Merseyside Youth Justice Strategic Leads Group where cross boarder joint working, collaboration and shared practice across

Merseyside YOTs occurs including training and development for YJS staff is identified, delivered and shared via the Collaborative Training Group (CTG).

Prevention and Early Intervention remain paramount to the work of Wirral YJS and the development of a safer more resilient community. This ensures all young people who are of a concern in the community will be identified to the YJS at an early stage and can be referred into Prevention for an appropriate intervention. Wirral YJS continues to provide a Prevention Service meeting different needs of young people through the delivery of programmes designed for the young person's/child's needs on assessment. We continue to work closely with Career Connect, Social Care, Schools, Police, Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team (WASBT), Public Health, CAMHS, CCG, Targeted Youth Service, Family Intervention, and Early Help Services. to ensure effective working relationships, sharing good practice and knowledge regarding the needs of the young people within and across the youth justice system.

The Integrated Front Door and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are based in the same building thus ensuring effective working links and networks are maintained. Managers from Wirral YJS continue to support Early Help meetings and we also provide information to the Family Intervention Service on all young people who are supported by the YJS. Family Intervention workers contribute to YJS multi-agency meetings where young people are assessed as High or Very High Safety & Wellbeing or Risk of Serious Harm to others to manage and reduce risk in the community through a partnership approach.

The Business Manager provides data to enable early identification of families which may fit the criteria for the Supporting Families programme (formerly Troubled Families). Data is also provided to monitor the Wirral Supporting Families Outcomes Plan and is now also part of the Breaking the Cycle Programme Outcomes Plan i.e., reductions in re-offending and reductions in anti-social behaviour.

Wirral YJS holds the Restorative Practice Kite Mark from the Restorative Justice Council. The Service will continue to ensure that we uphold our good practice in line with the Restorative Practice Kite Mark and to build on positive restorative outcomes both within the YJS and with partner agencies.

5. Performance and Priorities

The Youth Justice Board and the Youth Justice Management Board oversee the performance of the Service. Throughout 2020/21 performance has been reported on a quarterly basis to the Partnership Board and quarterly contact with the YJB's North-West Business Area Local Partnership Advisor has been maintained to identify and address key areas of performance.

In addition to the three YJB National Indicators; reducing first time entrants to the criminal justice system, reducing the use of custody, and reducing re-offending by young people in the criminal justice system, Wirral YJS also have local performance measures in place and reporting mechanisms for re-offending rates following Out of Court Disposals and offending by Looked After Children.

The final 2020/21 reported YJB data summary can be found in **Appendix 6** detailing the Merseyside Performance Comparison, of which Wirral's performance is included

Reducing the Number of First Time Entrants

Since 2009/10 Wirral YJS has seen significant reductions in the numbers of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. This was mainly attributable to the operation of Out of Court Disposals with Merseyside Police. Out of Court Disposals diverts young people from the criminal justice system and provides assessment and brief intervention.

First Time Entrants	Date	YJS Performance
Number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system (per 100,000 of 10-17 population)	January to December 2019	221
	January to December 2018	254

The YJB Performance Summary uses data from the Police National Computer (PNC). The latest data set published by the YJB compares January to December 2019 with January to December 2018. The YJB have used a population rate of 29,803 for young people living in Wirral aged 10 – 17 years for the 2018 cohort and a population of 30,158 for the 2019 cohort. The latest data set is showing a 13% reduction in the frequency rate of FTE's when comparing the above periods. This equates to a reduction in the actual number of FTE's of 9 young people.

The Merseyside average is a reduction of 7.5% and the National average is a reduction of 12.4% in FTE's frequency rates.

Wirral YJS continues to provide several preventative and diversionary services to young people at risk of offending or risk of anti-social behaviour. All these single agency referrals come direct to the Prevention Service to avoid delay in accessing intervention. Prevention Services still play a strong contributory role in Team around the Family for many cases thus ensuring a multi-agency collaborative approach to preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system.

Following a successful funding bid through the Violent Reduction Partnership (VRP) Wirral YJS were able to develop a new programme named Operation Inclusion. The programme has been developed with the support from Merseyside Police and Crown Prosecution Service to further support our young people and to reduce young people entering the Criminal Justice System. Young People and children who are arrested and whom have been identified as being exploited and/or vulnerable to exploitation are offered Operation Inclusion. These young people will have already been open to the YJS under the OOCB or Community Statutory Orders before being considered for the programme. Operation Inclusion is a robust programme that lasts up to 12 weeks. The young person and their families work with the YJS and Partner agencies to reduce offending behaviour and address the issues that lead to the offending behaviour. If they successfully complete the programme, then both Merseyside Police and the Crown Prosecution Service will NFA the offence. This programme was originally run as a pilot scheme within Wirral throughout the pandemic. It this has now been taken on board and will be run throughout the Merseyside region.

In addition, the Pan Merseyside Out of Court Disposal Protocol continues to be used whereby young people receive a Community Resolution with restorative justice at the heart of the intervention. Community Resolutions across Merseyside have been very successful and have played a strong role in reducing First Time Entrants.

The Merseyside OOCSD Scrutiny Panel incorporates representatives from Merseyside YOT Managers, Merseyside Police and Magistrates. The Scrutiny Panel examines and samples OOCSD to ensure consistency of decision making and suitability of disposals across Merseyside.

From 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 there were 181 young people who accessed Community Resolution programmes at Wirral YJS. The 2019 Community Resolution cohort consisted of 50 young people (i.e., all those who received a Community Resolution during January to March 2019). This cohort was tracked forward for 12 months (i.e., From April 2019 to March 2020) and found only 5 young people went on to re-offend – this equates to 10% re-offending rate for that cohort.

Reducing Re-offending

This measure tracks a rolling cohort of young people who have committed an offence in a 12-month (aggregated quarterly cohorts) period for the subsequent 12 months to identify if they are proven to have re-offended. The data for this performance indicator is taken from the Ministry of Justice published data (using the Police National Computer data) and because of the methodology used there is a significant delay in the time periods reported.

Binary Re-offending	Date	YJS Performance
Proven re-offending rate of young offenders (percentage of young people who have re-offended)	Apr 2018 – Mar 2019	40%
	Apr 2017 – Mar 2018	50%

The latest published data indicates 10% reduction in re-offending rates when comparing the above periods. It is important to recognise the significant reduction in the cohort numbers and acknowledge that those who remain within the cohort are the more persistent and complex young people who are entrenched in offending.

It is recognised that Wirral YJS’s success in diverting young people away from offending, means we are working with a smaller but more complex cohort of older young people who present with greater risks and vulnerabilities to themselves and the community. The challenge to reduce re-offending has been felt across Merseyside and was recognised as a priority for the MCJB. Re-offending of young people and the risks it presents including youth to adult transition were identified as key issues for the MCJB Reducing Re-offending Strategy. Merseyside YOT Operational Managers jointly collaborated to explore these issues, including revising the Transitions Protocol. Such joint working and collaboration have assisted in sharing good practice and local findings to focus on specific issues of re-offending to allow YOTs to respond to this increasing demand more easily.

Wirral YJS still addresses all matters pertaining to the young person’s offending including attitudes to offending, victim awareness/ restorative practices, offending behaviour programmes, peers and other causal factors including substance misuse, Education Training and Employment (ETE), and Health / CAMHS support to address offending and welfare issues. Many young people are also supported by wider Team Around the Family, Child in Need or Child Protection multi agency support mechanisms. We find many of our high-risk re-offenders are also

supported by our Family Matters Service due to the complex needs of the young person and their family.

Wirral YJS Management Team has set in place steps to ensure re-offending is a primary focus in intervention and management. This includes ensuring Case Management supervision specifically discusses young people who are re-offending, ensuring that case managers have addressed the re-offending and responded accordingly in relation to their intervention plans. Also, young people who receive Referral Orders are now seen prior to their Panel to commence interventions at an earlier opportunity. This increases support and intervention avoiding delays until the Contract is agreed, which can be up to 20 working days after sentence. Such changes should identify need and commence support and intervention in a timelier manner to address offending earlier and more effectively.

Wirral YJS has been using the YJB re-offending live tracker tool to conduct analysis around the current cohorts of young people and to establish any trends in re-offending. Early indications show reductions in the re-offending rates for the 2021 cohorts. This will allow us to track the specific cohorts and identify specifics such as age, most common re-offending offence, timing of re-offending within an Order and as such draw up an action plan to target the identified issues and areas. Findings from the live tracker tool will allow us to target local re-offending more effectively in 2021 and beyond.

Reduce the Use of Custody

It is widely recognised that imposing a custodial sentence should be used as a measure of last resort for children and young people.

Use of Custody	Date	YJS Performance
Young people receiving a custodial sentence (per 1,000 of 10-17 population)	Apr 2020 – Mar 2021	0.07 (2 young people)
	Apr 2019 – Mar 2020	0.23 (7 young people)

Wirral YJS has seen a reduction in the custodial rate of 0.17 during the above period when comparing with 0.07 baseline rate of 0.23. This equates to 5 less young people receiving custodial sentences.

Analysis

The above information against the three national targets and local out of court disposal rates indicates a positive direction of travel for those young people supported by Wirral Youth Justice Service. Appendix 6 shows how this compares to other YOTs across Merseyside.

In considering the priorities within this strategic plan, the YJMB has considered information available locally through data and analysis; and the themes highlighted through national reports.

What do we know about our young people supported by Youth Justice?

Age

Analysis of YJ data shows that half of the young people receiving substantive outcomes in Wirral were aged 16+ years.

Ethnicity

98% of the young people were from a White ethnic background, with 2% from a Black Caribbean ethnicity.

Gender

The vast majority of young people working with youth justice in Wirral are male. The latest set of data sets this at 87% for the reporting period to December 2020.

Analysis of the YJMB dashboard shows the following information in relation to the cohort of young people working with Youth Justice services in Wirral.

In the last financial year, impacted by Covid restrictions, there has been a 27% decrease in the number of young people working with youth justice., Interventions have reduced by 25%. This is compared to the baseline year of 2018-19.

The proportion of young people within the cohort for 2020/21 who are looked after by the local authority is just over 19%. This shows a 16% reduction in volume from 2018/19 and a 1% increase in the percentage of the cohort from 2019/20.

Asset plus has identified that 18% of the cohort have concerns linked to exploitation, compared to 4% in 2018/19. Much work has been done across partnerships to identify exploitation risks, the proportion of the cohort linked to such concerns reflects the increasing focus and awareness of exploitation.

The proportion of young people within the cohort not in education, employment or training has moved from 6.2% in 18/19 to 9.3% in 20/21.

Analysis of Asset Plus shows that the proportion of young people with Special Education Needs has increased from 7.4% to 15.3% between 18/19 and 20/21. This shows an increasing trend across the period.

Those young people identified as having a diagnosis of ADHD has reduced as a proportion of the overall caseload. In 18/19 young people with this diagnosis made up just over 20% of the cohort, whereas in 20/21 this was 16.8%.

Analysis of Asset Plus data shows that the proportion of young people with emotional or mental health concerns increased from 6.3% in 18/19 to 19.4% in 20/21. 19/20 saw only 4.8%.

Analysis of contacts into Children's Services between 19/20 and 20/21 highlights increased proportion of contacts relating to anti-social behaviour, peer on peer violence, harmful sexual behaviour, mental health and substance misuse concerns.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour is also highlighted by the recent 'Everyone's Invited' campaign and the Ofsted rapid review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges 2021.

An increase in the demand for Child to Adult Violence support was identified, this is reflective of the national trend as highlighted within the HMIP Annual Report 2019/20.

Violence accounts of the greatest proportion of offences leading to youth justice work. This was also highlighted within the HMIP Annual Report for 2019/20 as a national theme.

Data drawn together from Police, health and social care partners in respect of serious violence during the 2020 Covid period showed that whilst the overall levels of serious violence reduced, this was less evident in lockdown easing periods.

Longer term analysis of Police data undertaken by the Wirral Intelligence Service has shown that 34% of Wirral youth violence has injury and 10% is classed as serious violence, with 4% resulting in serious injury (GBH).

6% of youth violence is knife crime. 81% of this is committed by males. 34% of youth violence is committed between peers.

66% of all youth violence offences are committed by males. 14-16 years are the most common ages for youth offending. Serious violence is a slightly older average age group at 17 years of age.

Peak timings for overall youth violence across Wirral tend to be late afternoon during weekdays. There is some correlation to weekday offences taking place after school hours. Whilst not serious violence per se there is an inference based on this longer-term analysis that violence involving young people rises after the school day and less so during holidays and weekends.

Wirral Youth Justice Service Work

The above performance and analysis reflect that Wirral follows several of the identified national trends and is seeing smaller cohorts of offenders, with more complex needs. Repeat offending from a smaller more complex cohort can present challenges in supporting young people to live an offence free future. This places them at greater risk of custodial sentences being imposed should they repeatedly offend or commit serious offences.

It is acknowledged that there will remain occasions where the use of custody and remand remains appropriate and proportionate to the seriousness of the offence and to protect the wider public from harm. As highlighted within the HMIP Annual Report 2019/20, it is important to not lose sight of the risk of harm to others when taking a child first approach.

Wirral YJSs Assessment, Planned Intervention and Supervision process alongside the Risk, Safety & Wellbeing Management Process ensures all young people's individual needs and risks are recognised and addressed, through general supervision or multi-agency management and collaboration. Young people assessed as high or very high risk are monitored through monthly or quarterly multi agency meetings to share information, updates and monitor the progress of the young person. In addition, should a young person also fall within the Multi-Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) categories, they will also be monitored through this process to ensure suitable intervention, challenge and protection is afforded in such high-risk cases.

In relation to those young people who are the more entrenched offenders (with complex issues and needs) we are developing a Trauma Informed Intervention with the support of the Educational Psychologist and CAMH's worker. Wirral YJS is working towards an Enhanced Case Management system focussing more on Trauma based interventions with these young people, to ensure that we address Trauma and offending behaviour.

Case Managers actively support and motivate young people in custody to achieve their release at the earliest opportunity and to access training/employment and positive activities. This is achieved by strong relationships with local initiatives as well as Children's Services, Housing, Career Connect and Job Centre Plus. Case Managers offer direct contact with the careers advisors at commencement of custody to fully support young people in custody to be prepared for training or employment on release.

National Standards

Wirral YJS successfully completed and submitted the National Standards Audit 2020. The Audit result showed that all "Standards were Met" with the YJB advising they were satisfied that the self-assessment results were accurate and would therefore not be conducting a validation visit. The YJB congratulated the service on the Audit results. Work with continue within the YJS and develop reporting to the YJMB on adherence to National Standards, ensuring lead officers are aligned to each standard.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding of children and young people is a key priority and emphasis is placed with all partners in terms of meeting need and keeping children and young people safe and protected from harm. We continue to meet the needs of young people and their families across the Level 1- 4 continuum of need. All young people who enter YJS are screened for vulnerability as part of their initial assessment.

At a strategic level, the YJS Management Team are represented on all the various Safeguarding groups including Wirral Safeguarding Children's Partnership (WSCP), MAPPA, MARTHR, MACE and make an active contribution to ensure the safety of our young people is recognised and supported.

As stated previously in Governance and Partnership Arrangements the Head of Service for Contextual Safeguarding leads the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership's Contextual Safeguarding Committee. A Section 11 Safeguarding audit was completed during 2020 by Wirral YJS with partners no issues were found.

Wirral YJS also have caretaking or transfer responsibility for young people in Wirral placements from other authorities, this means strong working relationships and good communication with the Children's Homes and the placing Authority is vital to meet the needs of these children who often have very complex needs. Merseyside has a Caretaking & Transfer Policy and Wirral abides by the protocols regarding the movement and transfer of cases within the youth justice system to ensure effective and sustainable outcomes for these young people.

The Service Manager is a member of the Merseyside Strategic Leads Group which incorporates Greater Merseyside Collaborative Training Group (CTG). The development plan is drawn up each year and approved by the Greater Merseyside YOT Managers who ensure the annual

training plan includes relevant safeguarding programmes for YOT staff, above and beyond those offered by each Local Authority. In addition, training in safeguarding is mandatory for all employees and this is monitored through Wirral's Appraisal and Supervision processes. Wirral YJS ensures all staff and volunteers are adequately trained in safeguarding and can access further Level 2-4 safeguarding courses.

Wirral YJS staff have accessed Child Exploitation (CE) training days to raise awareness of CE. The training also introduced the use of the CE checklist with the young people that we have access to. In addition, Wirral YJS has ensured steps are in place to check young people entering the criminal justice system are checked for CE risks or vulnerabilities.

Wirral YJS Service Manager remains the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Merseyside Police 'Channel' for cases where there is concern regarding risks of radicalisation/extremism and attends both Channel Panel Quarterly and the Prevent Meetings.

Wirral YJS has an effective and robust Risk, Safety & Wellbeing Management Policy to address the risks and vulnerabilities of young people. This Policy includes themes in relation to safeguarding including Child Exploitation and Radicalisation/Extremism.

Public Protection

As stated above Wirral YJS has an effective and robust Risk, Safety & Wellbeing Management Policy and at the core of the policy remains the fact that Wirral YJS will assess all young people for vulnerability, as well as risk of serious harm to the public. The risk of harm is measured and all young people with identified concerns in this area should then have an Asset plus assessment where the Case Manager will identify the appropriate risk level for the young person and determine whether the level of risk is low, medium, high, or very high.

For those young people identified as Medium Risk the YJS Case Manager will discuss the management of risk with their line manager and monitor the risk through staff supervision. In all high and very high-risk cases, a meeting will be convened involving all relevant agencies and YJS specialists engaged with the young person and Chaired by a YJS Manager. At all initial meetings, the YJS police officer is invited to attend, to ensure all appropriate police intelligence is used to inform the assessment. The meeting shares information to determine the level of risk and to devise a risk management plan to ensure welfare and public protection are managed whilst supervising the young person within the community. All required actions are agreed, and a lead professional is identified to take responsibility for co-ordinating the actions. All cases managed via the YJS Risk, Safety & Wellbeing Management Procedures are recorded on a Risk Register, which is updated after each risk or safety & wellbeing management meeting.

The Assistant Director for Early Help & Protection and the Chair for the Youth Justice Management Board has led the development of the Local Authority's Domestic Abuse strategy. During a previous Domestic Abuse Needs assessment, the link between experiencing/witnessing domestic abuse leading to child to parent violence and teenage relationship abuse was highlighted, as prevalent, in the young people Wirral YJS and Children's Services are working with. It has been identified that this area of work is often ignored and if addressed early could prevent higher risk public protection issues. The new strategy has a priority for a *kinder, brighter future for the next generation*, which focuses on young people and their education on domestic abuse and healthy relationships.

Wirral YJS have two identified staff members who have been trained in Non-Violent Resistance child to adult violence. They take referrals from the Police to work with parents to develop strategies to reduce Police Call outs and reduce child to adult violence. Later in the year the two staff members as well the team manager (who has responsibility for child to adult violence) will undertake the “who’s in charge” training recommended by the Youth Justice Board. This will also include additional staff from the Local Authority from the Early Help Teams to ensure that the right service is provided at the right time to families. Work in underway to strengthen partnership working with third sector colleagues, as The Open Door Charity pilot a peer support group for parents experiencing violence and aggression from their children.

In addition, the issue of Hate Crime also recognises the vulnerabilities in some young people and how they can be groomed for radicalisation/extremist purposes. As stated earlier this is often approached from a safeguarding angle, but such young people can present as a huge risk of serious harm to the community, and this will be monitored by the Chanel Panel on Wirral.

The YJS Service Manager sits on the Chanel Panel and is part of and responsible for the Prevent Agenda within Wirral YJS. Any young people who agencies believe are being groomed for radicalisation or have extremist views are referred to the Panel. The Panel consists of agencies from the Children and Adult Services workforce. Prevent and the Prevent Agenda currently sit within the Safer Wirral Service. Chanel will remain within the Adult and Children’s Social Care Departments.

All statutory young people who enter YJS are assessed via Asset plus for eligibility of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). All MAPPA eligible cases will be referred to the Merseyside MAPPA Co-ordinator (NPS) for consideration, where necessary. MAPPA meetings are always attended by the YJS Case Manager, YJS Team Leader and Service Manager. Wirral YJS does not have any MAPPA cases open at the time of writing the strategic plan. All MAPPA Cases are reported at Youth Justice Management Board. This ensures that very high-risk cases are monitored, and measures are put in place across relevant partner agencies to ensure a joined-up approach to the management of risk, whilst also being overseen from a senior management perspective.

Child to Adult Violence - CAV

It has been noted that Parents do not press charges for incidents relating to violence and aggression from Child (perpetrators) to parents/carers (victims). One of the new service priority areas was to develop and staff a small team to work with families that Police are called out to. These are parents/carers who do not want to prosecute their children but as a family need support.

The Youth Justice Service has been working with parents throughout the pandemic virtually on the Non-Resistance Violence Model, although take up has been lower than we would have hoped. Given it was being ran virtually, it is hoped as we come out of the lockdown, we can develop the offer further by staff undertaking the “who’s in charge” and “non-resistance model” training along with our colleagues in Early Help and Social Care. We will ensure that we are working together with appropriate pathways for the right service at the right time.

An initial working group for all staff undertaking the support will be undertaken to ensure that all staff and managers are aware of specific criteria for services. A pathway and planning session

will also take place and regular meetings between services will enable managers to monitor referrals, support staff through the programme and look at any emerging themes.

Feedback from the programme will then be added to the agendas for the Youth Justice Management Board and the Partnership for Children, Young People and Families.

It is then hoped that after staff are more confident in using the two models that a regular support group with the support of professionals can be set up monthly where parents can come together to support each other in our onsite canteen. The aim is to have a parenting support group that is ran and managed by parents who have been through the programme.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The second development area to continue from last year for Wirral Youth Justice Service (YJS) involves Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB). The YJS have identified three staff who have the training and the skills to work in this area. With the pandemic we have seen an increase of referrals to the service over the past 12 months, this team has developed links and referral processes to support young people either through arrest or prevention. The Service employs a specialist Harmful Sexual Behaviour Social Worker. Additionally, once we come out of lockdown the staff group will return to offering regular HSB awareness sessions (through the same guarding board training programme that is open all agencies that work with Children, young people, and their families). Working closely with our Educational Phycologist and the CAMH's worker regular consultations and advice will be given to the staff team working with the families.

Ofsted's recent rapid review report in relation to sexual abuse in schools and colleges; and the focus that Everyone's Invited has placed on HSB, provide some enhanced understanding as to the impact inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviours can have on young people. We will work together as agencies to support young people and look to help change the culture, through the Youth Justice Service and Partnership Boards, educating young people to understand the impact of inappropriate behaviour and language with peers.

Serious Violence and Child Exploitation

As with many parts of the country, Wirral has seen increases in more serious violent offending in post lockdown periods. Violence is also the main category of offending for youth justice case work. Tackling the prevalence of violence across Wirral is one of the areas of focus under the Safer Wirral Strategy and Safer Wirral Partnership Board. Wirral Youth Justice Service have a seconded officer working within the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, ensuring the work of the partnership supports prevention using a public health approach. The prevention work highlighted in this plan includes targeted education interventions across schools against this theme.

Wirral run a MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation) meeting, held once a fortnight. This meeting retains oversight of those young people with signs of evidence of exploitation. Wirral Youth Justice Service are core members with an identified team leader sitting on all the MACE meetings. In addition to this we have a Youth Justice Service case manager seconded to Wirral's COMPASS team. The COMPASS team is based within the same building as the YJS and is made up of many partner agencies such as the Local Authority, Health, Catch 22, YJS and Police to work with young people at risk of exploitation and those who go missing from home or care.

The MACE link team leader also supports the MARTHR (Multi Agency Threat, Risk & Harm) meetings. These are again multi-agency forum, with the Police taking the lead looking at perpetrators or those thought to be a risk to children and young people in the context of child exploitation.

New Development for 2021/2022

Trauma Informed Practice/ Working towards Enhanced Case Management

This is a relatively new initiative that Wirral YJS have developed as mentioned earlier in the plan, there are many young people within our cohort that have complex needs. It is widely known that these young people may have and may still be suffering from Trauma. All staff undertook ACE's training some years ago and with this, we have set a priority plan for 2021/2022 to increase their knowledge and understanding of Trauma and the effects it has on a young person's life and development. All staff are to receive robust four-day Trauma training to give them a more detailed understanding of how Trauma can affect the daily lives of a young person. The training will also give staff strategies to engage and encourage young people to support them through Trauma development (where the more traditional Youth Justice Interventions may not do this). It will ensure that the young person is developmentally ready to change and reduce their offending behaviours. Once all staff have completed the four-day training and developed their understanding, Wirral YJS plan to move to the Trauma Recovery Model of Enhanced Case Management later in the year.

Prevention

Youth Offer

Wirral has recently undertaken a review of the Youth Offer within Wirral, the priority over the next 12 months within Wirral Youth Justice Service would be to look at all young people who are referred to the Service be that through Courts / Prevention Service as part of their induction are given details of what is available for them to access under the Youth Offer. The Youth Offer is Open to all Young People. Staff will encourage and support young people to access the provisions as part of their package of support and to assist with the exit strategy once the young person concludes their work with the YJS.

In the Zone

The final priority and development area that Wirral YJS is developing this year is a programme called In the Zone. The 'In the Zone' programme was originally developed pre covid and had to be put on hold due to school restrictions. With schools now re-opening and agencies being able to attend schools we can now develop this programme fully.

In the Zone programme is a multi-agency delivery of prevention and information sharing for year 8 students across all schools on the Wirral. The programme has six areas these being:

- Peer and relationships growing up
- Substance Misuse
- Knife crime, the law and impact on you
- ASB and its effects on the community
- Child Exploitation, what is it, what to do
- Gangs and County Lines

The aim of the programme is to run whole year group sessions for Year 8 students. Each Zone has a theme as described above, it will be run with 10 to 15 young people in each group where they are involved in a game for 30 minutes. It is hoped that short, intense, and fun 30-minute sessions will be more productive than power point presentations and assemblies. Young people are more likely to speak to professionals in smaller groups and to ask questions with their peers.

Safer Schools Programme

The Wirral Safer Schools officers will be delivering a collaborative program of activity in conjunction with partner agencies with the support of the Youth Justice Service, the aim is to deliver interventions include.

Introduction followed by “TO THE EDGE” film which looks at knife crime, drugs, child exploitation and domestic issues.

The group will then be split in to 4 groups and will visit the 4 activity stations throughout the day.

- Film discussion & Case studies
- Street first aid and how to communicate with emergency services.
- Team building physical activity.
- Music session during which pupils will produce a rap about subjects looked at through the day.

Sessions will be targeted at Year 9 students in the future to ensure no cross over with the in the Zone events for Year 8.

MVRP Mentors in Violence

The Merseyside Youth Association, funded and in collaboration with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, are scaling up the ‘Mentors in Violence’ scheme across eight Wirral secondary schools. This sees teachers and identified pupils supported to mentor others, working within the framework developed and tested in Scotland. Mentors in violence is shown to have a long terms impact on reducing exclusions and improving behaviour.

Prevention Coordination

There are several local and national funding streams targeting prevention and diversionary activity for children and young people, linked to several themes. To ensure that there is joined up and co-ordinated approach to Prevention offers and support within the Wirral Police, statutory partners, community voluntary sector and Wirral Youth Justice Service are developing a Vulnerability/Prevention Coordination panel. it was recognised that there are many agencies supporting young people across the Borough, on a one to one or group work basis. To ensure that the right service is being delivered in the right area and the right time, this prevention coordination panel will help identify the best support and intervention required for young people vulnerable to risk outside the home.

Performance and Priorities Table

National Targets and Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce First Time Entrants (KPI) • Reduce Re-offending (KPI) • Reduce the Use of Custody (KPI)
Local Priorities and Key Performance Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child to Adult Violence: To develop the service offered to parents whose children are violent towards them, to extend the offer by working with colleagues from outside the Youth Justice Service using the “who’s in charge” model of support. With the end goal having a parenting support group that is ran and managed by parents who have been through the programme. CAV was a feature within the HMIP annual Report 2020. 2. Harmful Sexual Behaviour Continue to deliver workshops for front line staff on the Harmful Sexual Behaviour through the Safeguarding Boards training programme. This will ensure that front line staff are ‘risk aware’ when working with young people who display sexualised behaviour. Professionals will be given the knowledge and strategies to work with young people with such behaviours. Pathways and referral processes will be developed for those young people that do need additional specialist support and risk management. This area has been highlighted by the recent ‘Everyone’s Invited campaign and the Ofsted rapid review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges 2021. 3. Trauma Informed Practice and Enhanced Case Management. Undertake training within the Service, to ensure that staff can recognise and understand Trauma and behaviours. To give staff the tools and knowledge to engage and work with young people for may have been affected by Trauma. To correctly identify young people who could access the Enhanced Case Management Intervention and ensure that they are supported throughout the intervention. Additionally, that all agencies involved with the young person are engaging with and support the Enhanced Case Management model. This priority reflects the smaller cohorts with increased complexity across youth justice. 4. Serious Youth Violence and Exploitation Impact of covid restriction easing on youth violence. Work alongside Community Safety Partners and Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership to maintain a focus on violence and exploitation within the context of the YJS. Making best use of problem solving, contextual safeguarding and public health approaches. This was a theme highlighted within the HMIP Annual Report 2020; and the focus of recent learning

and development engagement by the Department for Education, linking violence reduction partnership, community safety and safeguarding partnership activity.

5. Education, Employment and Training (KPI)

For all young people open to the Youth Justice Service 16+ to have the opportunity of a minimum of 12 hours Education, Employment and Training (EET). This priority has been drawn from data analysis by the YJMB.

6. Education – CME 25 (KPI)

The Youth justice cohort have access to a minimum 25 hours education. This priority has been drawn from data analysis by the YJMB.

7. Participation and Engagement

Increase Young People's involvement and participation to ensure service provision meets their needs. This area was highlighted in the HMIP Domain 1 Self-Assessment undertaken by YJMB in 2021.

8. Mental Health Support (KPI)

To provide specialist mental health consultation support for young people open to the service. Case workers identifying any concerns with regards to the young person's mental health and wellbeing arrange a consultation with the aligned CAMH's worker to access support. This priority has been drawn from data analysis by the YJMB.

9. Prevention support for vulnerable cohorts (KPI)

To increase prevention activity/support for our looked after children. Data shows limited referrals and work with this cohort who are of the most vulnerable. This priority is drawn from data analysis by the YJMB.

6. Youth Voice:

In 2021, Wirral Youth Justice Service undertook a survey of young people who had received support. The full survey will be presented to Wirral YJMB in July 2021. The below are quotes taken from the survey.

Q: What help did you receive from Wirral Youth Justice?

Being in contact with connections to look at college options to further my career and give me a better chance for the future.

My Worker helped me to recognise my behaviour upset my family, especially my mum.

Emotional help. Changed my behaviour.

I had help with some personal problems.

I learned what was wrong with what I did, and what I can do to prevent doing it in the future.

Education on the law and the importance of consent Dealing with relationships and the best way of dealing with it. Where I saw myself in 5 years and what I would like to do.

The help I received from YOT was outstanding. They helped me to understand how to stay safe and how to be a more positive person.

Q: Anything else you would like to tell us that would support more young people in the future?

Getting caught at the beginning of my offending behaviour did me a favour.

Richard was absolutely amazing. He supported me through lockdowns and found ways to make me think more positive even when I was feeling low!

Just keep on doing what you are doing as it helped others and helped me.

I felt that I had a good experience, being able to talk to someone help a lot.

No, it was very helpful, and I am really thankful for the support I was given.

Don't carry knives. I have loved it.

To date, 100% of respondents stated that their involvement with Wirral Youth Justice has been helpful to prevent further offending. 100% said their worker was always available and 100% said they are less likely to re-offend.

10% were not clear how or why they offended in the first instance, with 5% saying they would like to change some aspects of the youth justice support they received.

Further developing Wirral Youth Justice Participation and Engagement is a priority within the service plan, below.

7. Service: Improvement Plan

Target Area	Actions for 2021/22	Lead	Date
Reducing Re-offending	Embed YJB Re-offending Toolkit data to aid analysis for YJMB.	Business Manager	July 2021
Reducing the use of Custody	Case Managers to ensure young people leaving custody are effectively re-settled as Per National Standards Self-Assessment and Peer Learning.	Service Manager	Ongoing Monitoring through YJMB.
National Standards	Continuous Improvement relating to National Standards, linked to Self Assessment/Audit 2020. Alignment of YJMB leads to National Standards for 2021/22.	Service Manager	Ongoing monitoring through Operational Governance and YJMB.
Engagement and Participation	Further develop and embed participation. Develop YJ P&E cohort and embed system for Young People's views to inform and develop service provision, considering equality objectives. We will ensure that all engagement activities are as accessible as possible and will take any request for reasonable adjustments into consideration.	Service Manager and Volunteer Coordinator	September 201
Equality Objectives	Deliver Equality objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan. An overarching Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been produced for this strategy and this will be regularly reviewed to ensure we continue to meet our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Additional EIA's may be produced to cover policy and action plans where appropriate.	Service Manager. YJMB and All Leaders.	Ongoing Monitoring through YJMB & operational governance.
Staff training HSB	Staff in HSB team to set programme of HSB briefings to the wider children's workforce and relevant partner agencies.	Lead Manager for HSB and staff in HSB team	September 2021

CAMHS Partnership	YJ	Secure CAMHS resource and establish process for triage/assessment across case workers.	CAMHS/CJLT	September 2021
Trauma Informed practice		All staff to undertake Trauma training	All staff, All Managers	May & July 2021
Trauma Informed practice		Build on Trauma training to look at enhanced case management model and training/development for specific cases.	All Staff, All Managers	September 2021
Trauma Informed Practice		Enhance the YJ environment/building to support trauma informed practice/engagement with young people.	Service Manager	September 2021
Child to Adult Violence (CAV)		For staff to attend the “who’s in charge” training develop pathways with colleagues from early help, to build a parenting support network for parents to access.	2 identified staff, 1 Lead Manager	August 2021
In the Zone		Staff member to work alongside partner agencies to deliver the “In the Zone” programme within all secondary school in Wirral.	1 identified staff, 1 Lead Manager	August 2021
Prevention for CLA.		Deliver awareness raising sessions to staff within Children’s Social Care teams.	Lead Manager	September 2021
Develop and deliver Action Plan Specific to Section 91 Peer Learning June 2021		Learning to be presented to YJMB and Action Plan developed to address learning points. Learning to be embedded and reported back to YJMB.	Service Manager	September 2021
YJMB Development		YJMB induction and development 2021/22. Taking into account YJMB HMIP Domain 1 Self-Assessment April 2021.	YJMB Chair. Service Manager/Head of Service	September 2021
Communication		Strategic YJ plan and YJS work to be communicated to stakeholders.	YJMB, Head of Service and Service Manager.	July 2021 Onwards

8. Responding and Recovery: COVID-19

During unprecedented circumstances with the Covid- 19 pandemic, Wirral Youth Justice Service worked quickly to adapt to the changes. We undertook detailed and robust risk assessments within the service to ensure that we continued to support children, young people, their families,

and the community. We RAG rated (Red Amber Green) casework at the very beginning to ensure that those young people who still required face to face interventions due to risks and vulnerabilities were seen and that those who did not had regular telephone and video calls with their case managers.

Moving into the 'new normal' Wirral YJS has started to re-mobilise the service. The main Youth Justice Centre has been re-opened giving staff the ability to work with young people under strict government covid guidelines. Staff at present maintain the working from home guidance if they can and will return to the office once Local Authority decides to do so.

Group work, at time of writing the report, has not commenced. Given covid restrictions this will be looked at in the next few months following Covid restrictions being lifted, and appropriate risk assessments being completed.

9. Challenges, Risks, and Issues

Challenge to resources continues to be prevalent in the current climate. However, the commitment of the volunteers, staff and managers within Wirral YJS and Partners to the youth justice agenda and to achieving sustainable outcomes for the children and families continues to drive delivery. We will continue to balance children's welfare with protection of the public through effective interventions to ensure partners and the community have confidence in our practice and performance.

Within this strategic plan, there is the added challenge of Covid and working to what will be the "new normal" going forward. Within Wirral Youth Justice Service, we have a remobilisation plan in place and will monitor the national picture on infection rates and government road map. We are aware that young people mental health will have and will continue to be affected by the pandemic and will monitor this through our case management and feedback from young people.

Wirral YJS was not required to complete any Critical Learning Reviews (CLR) during in 2020/21. Wirral YJS was also not required to complete any findings for serious case reviews during 2020/21.

To continuously improve and learn, Wirral YJS sought the help of a neighbouring YOT to peer review two cases. Two young people who have been recalled under Section 91 of the Sentencing Guidelines. Wirral historically have not had many young people open on Section 91 sentence. Findings identified some good practice but also highlighted areas for consideration. This is to be presented at the YJMB and an action plan developed to track how this learning is embedded. All staff through the CTG training consortium will undertake relevant training to give them more confidence on decision making and the requirements under the licence for future 'Section 91' young people. This is reflected with the plans at Section 7, above.

Outside of Covid specific matters, the following risk and issues were identified.

Risk or Issue	Mitigation/Response
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in funding allocation to YJS placing pressure on ability to deliver core business, statutory duties, and performance outcomes. • Long remand periods for young people before sentencing that will impact on an overspend and impact of youth justice budget. • Reductions in resources, key absence, or inability to fill vacancies resulting in reduced staffing to deliver effective outcomes. • Changes to pre-court disposal process (i.e., loss of Community Resolution) leads to an increase in the number of First-Time Entrants into the Youth Justice System. • Changes to governance arrangements, YJMB membership, and threats to contributions/secondments to YJS affecting statutory delivery and outcomes for children. • Increase in FTE / re offending and custody. • Economic Impact of Covid on EET opportunities for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular budget monitoring and reporting to YJMB. Value for money/Impact reporting to the YJMB. • Ensure that case workers and managers/YJMB advocate for expeditious criminal justice processes in the best interest of the child. • Monitoring of staffing and resources through YJMB reports and oversight against outcomes and priorities. • Engagement with MCJB and OPCC through governance and YJMB membership. • YJMB membership and oversight. Challenge of YJMB Chair and Chief Executive as required. • Effective governance and operational performance management practice and development. Links to wider governance across youth justice systems and community safety. • Board membership includes 14-19 Head of Service with links to EET opportunities, funding insight and chamber of commerce. YJMB chair sits on Partnership for Children, Young People and Families.
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10. Communication

The Strategic Youth Justice Plan will be presented to the Children, Young People and Education Committee in September 2021. Members of the Wirral Youth Justice Management Board have participated in the development of this strategy, for formal agreement at YJMB on the 7th of July 2021.

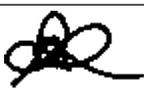
Communication of the Strategic Plan and work of the Youth Justice Service is reflected in the improvement plan at Section 7 of this document. Youth Voice through cohort survey is set out

in Section 6. The further development of YJS participation and engagement is reflected in the improvement plan at Section 7.

The Wirral YJMB circulate a quarterly newsletter relating to the work of the Wirral Youth Justice Service and YJMB. The Wirral Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Virtual Learning Event launched in April 2021 includes an overview of the Wirral YJMB.

The Wirral Youth Justice Service has a webpage hosted on the Wirral Council internet site, providing an overview of the service and best means of contact. More information can be found at the below link. <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-reduction/youth-offending-service>

11. Plan Authorisation Signatories

Name	Role	Signature	Date
Elizabeth Hartley	Assistant Director Early Help & Prevention Chair YJMB		30 th June 2021
Kathy Gill	Service Manager Wirral Youth Justice Service Wirral Council		30 th June 2021
Tony Kirk	Head of Service Contextual Safeguarding Wirral Council		30 th June 2021

Appendices

Appendix 1	Table 1 - 'Partner Contributions to the Youth Offending Partnership Pooled Budget 2021/22'
Appendix 2	B7 & B8 Staffing Chart
Appendix 3	Wirral Council Senior Management Structure 2021
Appendix 4	Senior Management Structure 2021
Appendix 5	YJMB Membership
Appendix 6	YJB Performance Comparison Table

Appendix 1

Table 1: Partner contributions to the youth offending partnership pooled budget 2021/22

Agency	Staffing costs (£)	Payments in kind – revenue (£)	Other delegated funds (£)	Total (£)
Local Authority*	1,179,100	0	0	1,179,100
Police	0	1 FTE	0	0
Probation	5,000	0.6 FTE	0	5,000
Health	0	0.4 FTE CAMHS School Nurse (3 Hrs Clinic)	0	0
Police Crime Commissioner Grant (PCC)**	73,100	0	0	73,100
YJB Youth Justice Grant	607,393	0	0	607,393
Other***	0	0	86,874	86,874
Total	1,864,593	0	86,874	1,951,467

* For multi-authority YOTs, the totality of local authority contributions should be described as one figure.

** Any money from the police and crime commissioner that has been routed through a local crime reduction partnership should be included here.

*** It should be noted that the 'Other' category is for additional funding that the YOT can use for any general youth justice activities. Accordingly, funding such as the YJB Grant for Junior Attendance Centres should not be included. Remand grant is reflected here.

Appendix 2 (B7) Staffing Chart

B7: Staff in the Youth Offending Team (by headcount as at 30.06.21)												
	Strategic Manager		Operational Manager		Practitioner		Administration		Sessional	Student	Volunteer	Total
	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT				
Permanent	0	1	1	3	8	13	1	4				31
Fixed Term												
Outsourced												
Temporary									4		42	46
Vacant				1		2						3
Seconded Children's Services												
Seconded Probation					1							1
Seconded Police						1						1
Seconded Health (Mental Health)					1							1
Seconded Health (Physical health)												
Seconded Health (Other)												
Education					1							1
Connexions					1							1
Other												
TOTAL	0	1	1	4	12	16	1	4	4	0		85
Disabled (Self-Classified)		1	1		1							

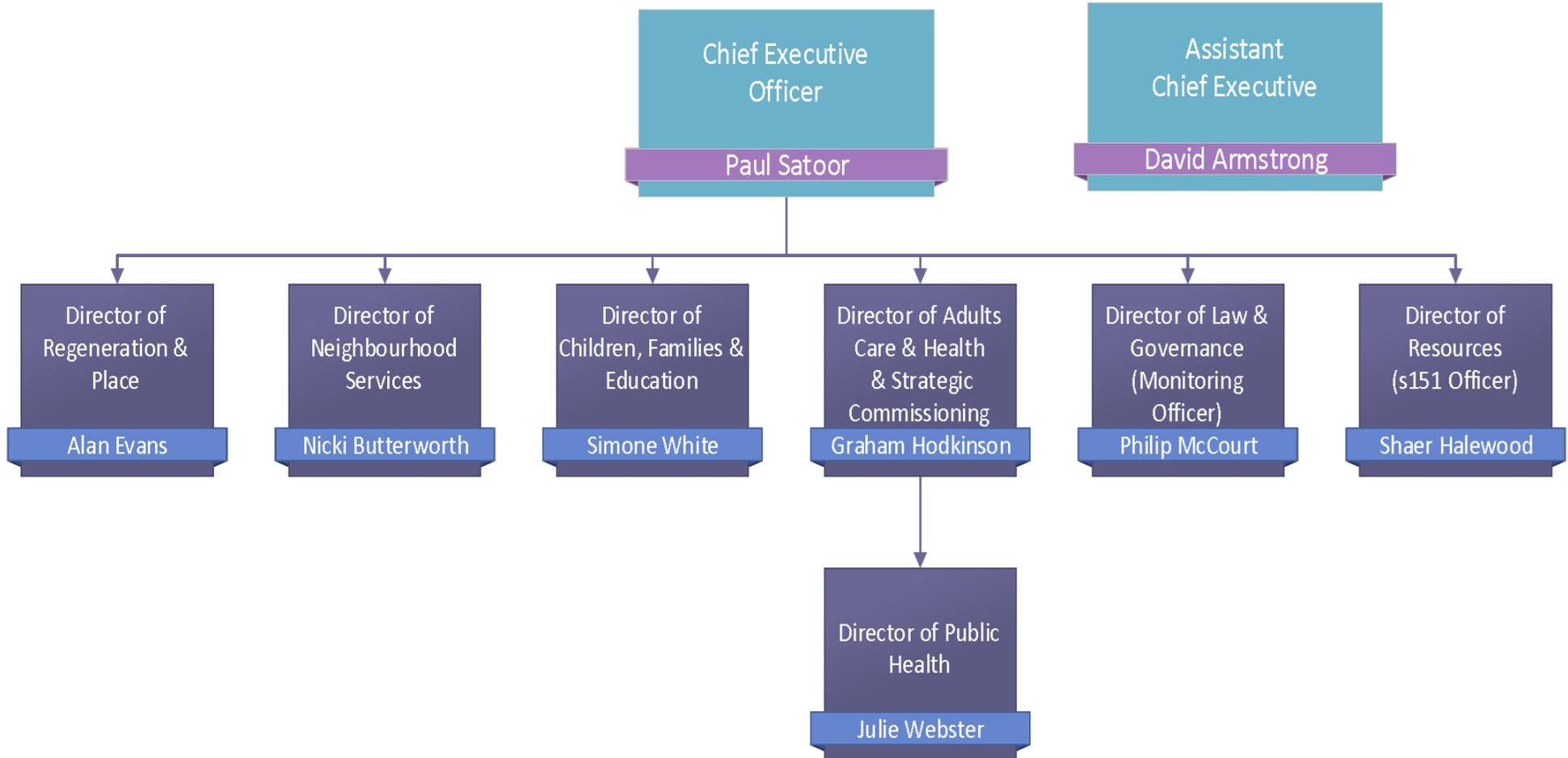
Appendix 2 (B8) Staff in the Youth Offending Team by Gender and Ethnicity

B8: Staff in the Youth Offending Team by Gender and Ethnicity (as at 30.06.21)																
	Strategic Manager		Operational Manager		Practitioner		Administration		Sessional		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Other Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian																
Black																
Mixed					1									1	1	1
White		1	2	2	7	18	1	4		4	7	13	7	13	24	55
Any other ethnic group												1				1
Not known																
Total	0	1	2	2	8	18	1	4	0	4	7	14	7	14	25	57
Welsh speakers*																

* Welsh YOTs only

Appendix 3 Wirral Council Strategic Management Structure – June 2021

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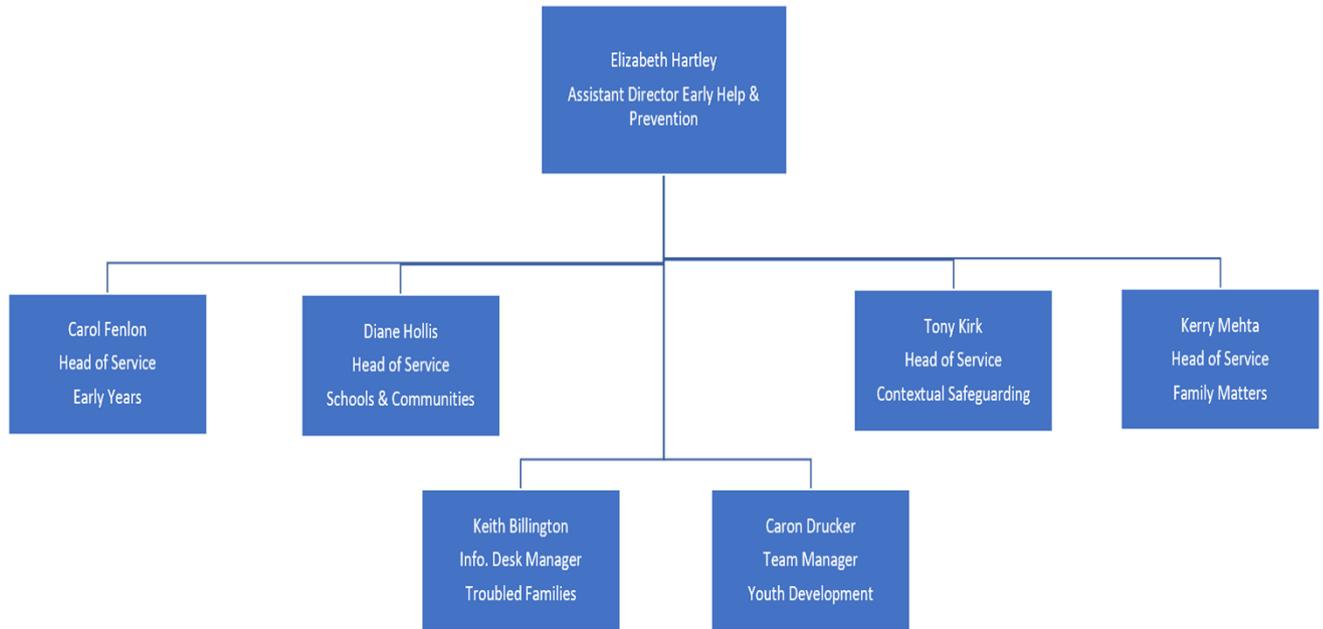
Appendix 4

Senior Management Structure June 2021



Appendix 5

Early Help and Prevention Management Structure June 2021



Appendix 6

YJMB Membership 2021

Wirral Youth Justice Management Board Members

Name	Role	Organisation
Elizabeth Hartley	Assistant Director for Early Help & Prevention	Wirral Council
Kathy Gill	Service Manager Wirral Youth Offending Service	Wirral Council
Tony Kirk	Head of Service Contextual Safeguarding	Wirral Council
Lynn Jones	Business Manager Wirral Youth Justice Service	Wirral Council
Martin Earl & Roger Pegram	Superintendent (CSP Deputy Chair) Chief Inspector, Operations Support	Merseyside Police
Susie Haggstrom & Peter Ashworth	Chair of the Wirral Youth Panel of Magistrates & Deputy Chair	Wirral Magistrates Court
Gary Squire	Magistrates Court	Wirral Magistrates Court
Karen Metcalf	Fire Prevention Officer	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
Carla Jones	Senior Manager, Wirral Probation	National Probation Service
Helen Heeley	Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children/Children Looked After	NHS Wirral CCG
Nicky Robinson	Deputy Head of Clinical Services, Wirral CAHMS	Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Lisa Newman	Head of Operational Housing Services	Wirral Council
Julie Graham	Senior Public Health Manager	Wirral Council
Anna Dollard	SEN Manager. Education	Wirral Council
Alexsandra Kaitell	Head of Service. Assessment and Intervention. Children's Services	Wirral Council
Kerry Mehta	Head of Service. Family Matters. Children's Services.	Wirral Council
Eifion Burke	Head of Service. Permanence. Children's Services	Wirral Council
Paul Smith	Head of Service, 14-19 Strategy, Education, Wirral Children's Services. (NEET and Leaving Care)	Wirral Council

Appendix 7

Merseyside Performance Comparison for April 2020 – March 2021

Source: YJB YOT Data Summary version 106

	Wirral	Liverpool	Knowsley	Sefton	St. Helens	Merseyside PCC area
Data Summary						
First Time Entrants						
Jan - Dec 2019 (latest period)						
PNC Numbers of FTEs	66	136	30	41	27	300
PNC rate per 100,000	221	360	216	173	174	229
Jan - Dec 2018						
PNC Numbers of FTE's	75	121	46	51	27	320
PNC rate per 100,000	254	326	337	218	174	262
Number difference	-9	15	-16	-10	0	-20
% difference	-13%	11%	-36%	-21%	0%	-12.6%

Use of custody						
Apr 20 – Mar 21 (latest period)						
Custodial disposals	2	6	3	0	0	11
Rate per 1,000	0.07	0.16	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.09
Apr 19 – Mar 20						
Custodial disposals	7	22	5	1	3	38
Rate per 1,000	0.23	0.57	0.36	0.04	0.19	0.28
Difference in rates	-17%	-42%	-14%	-4%	-19%	-19.2%

Re-offending rate						
Apr 18 – Mar 19 cohort						
Number in the cohort	115	275	66	125	79	660
Number of re-offenders	46	108	18	56	37	265
Number of re-offences	154	422	63	128	120	887
Re-offences per re-offender	3.35	3.91	3.50	2.29	3.24	3.26
Frequency rate	1.34	1.53	0.95	1.02	1.52	1.27
Binary rate	40.0%	39.3%	27.3%	44.8%	46.8%	39.6%
Apr 17 – Mar 18 cohort						
Number in the cohort	86	318	93	122	91	710
Number of re-offenders	43	140	38	62	37	320
Number of re-offences	154	473	113	184	137	1,061
Re-offences per re-offender	3.58	3.38	2.97	2.97	3.70	3.32
Frequency rate	1.79	1.49	1.22	1.51	1.51	1.50
Binary rate	50.0%	44.0%	40.9%	50.8%	40.7%	45.3%
Differences between cohorts						
Re-offences per re-offenders Difference	-3.6	0.5	0.5	-0.7	-0.5	-0.06
Frequency rate difference	-0.5	0.0	-0.3	-0.5	0.0	-0.23
Binary rate difference	-10.0%	-4.8%	-13.6%	-6.0%	6.2%	-5.7%

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Children First

Wirral Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2021-22

Hello!

Welcome to the Children First version of Wirral's Strategic Plan for our Youth Justice Service. Every year we produce a plan of what we're going to do to support children and young people who come into contact with the Youth Justice Service. This year we've produced a version for young people to let you know what we're doing, how and why we're doing it, and that we want to work together to help all young people stay safe and achieve the best possible outcomes.

Your YJMB Members

Firstly, let's introduce the Youth Justice Management Board (we call it the YJMB for short).

The YJMB is a group of managers from across different services like education, housing, social care, and police, who meet with the manager of the Youth Justice Service to improve support and services.



Youth Justice Services

Kathy Gill – YJS Service Manager

Tony Kirk – Head of Service Contextual Safeguarding

Lynn Jones – YJS Business Manager



Children and Family

Elizabeth Hartley – Assistant Director Early Help & Prevention (WYMB Chair)

Lisa Newman – Assistant Director for Housing

Alex Kaitell – Head of Service Children's Social Care

Eifion Burke – Head of Service Children Looked After

Kerry Mehta – Head of Service Family Matters



Health Services

Helen Heeley – Designated Safeguarding Nurse, Wirral CCG

Nicky Robinson – Deputy Head of Clinical Services, Wirral CAMHS

Julie Graham – Senior Public Health Manager

Your YJMB Members

The YJMB meets every couple of months to discuss how well (or not) the service is doing and to agree on what it can do to make things better. We make decisions about services, funding, training, and what it is members can do to make their services (schools, health centres, colleges, etc) better for young people supported by Youth Justice Services. It's the YJMB who write the annual plan.



Criminal Justice and Emergency Services

Martin Earl – Superintendent, Merseyside Police

Roger Pegram – Chief Inspector, Merseyside Police

Lucy Johnson – Community Engagement Officer, PCC Office

Carla Jones – Senior Manager, Probation Services

Karen Metcalf – Fire Prevention Officer, MFRS

Susie Haggstrom – Wirral Youth Panel of Magistrates

Peter Ashworth – Wirral Youth Panel of Magistrates



Education Services

Paul Smith – Head of Service Learning, Skills and Employment

Anna Dollard – Special Educational Needs Manager



Our Vision

What Wirral's YJMB Want for Young People

- 3. To bring about change for our young people and their families, so they can contribute fully to society and live a brighter future, in safe and pleasant communities.**
- 2. For our young people to be treated fairly by the youth justice system; and receive help that recognises their individual needs and builds on their strengths through statutory work or preventative support.**
- 1. For our young people involved, or on the cusp of, the criminal justice system to be seen as “children first, offenders second”.**

Our Vision & Priorities

We want everyone to remember that young people involved with the Youth Justice Service are children who need, and deserve, the same care, support, attention, and encouragement as all children do.

We understand being treated fairly is really important to everyone, and we believe that all young people are individuals, with their own talents and abilities, who with the right support will do well.

Even when things haven't gone well in the past, or young people have made mistakes, we want to help them move forward positively so that they can live the rest of their lives as well as possible.

As well as having this vision, we also have a set of principles to work by. From those principles there are some key words we'd like to share with you



How well are we doing?

How well are our Youth Justice services doing?
There are 3 ways of measuring how well we are doing; they're called **Key Performance Indicators**.

Key Performance Indicator 1

Young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time (also known as **First-Time Entrants**)

First time entrant rate
(per 100,00 of population
aged 10 - 17)

Wirral in 2018

254

Wirral in 2019

221

How well are we doing?

How well are our Youth Justice services doing?
There are 3 ways of measuring how well we are doing; they're called **Key Performance Indicators**.

Key Performance Indicator 2

Young people offending more than once within 12 months (also known as Re-Offending Rate)

Re-offending rate
(percentage of young people reoffending)

Wirral 2017-18

50%

Wirral 2018-19

40%

How well are we doing?

How well are our Youth Justice services doing?
There are 3 ways of measuring how well we are doing; they're called **Key Performance Indicators**.

Key Performance Indicator 3

Young people going into custody (also known as use of custody)

Young people receiving a custodial sentence (per 1000 of 10 – 17 year olds)

Wirral 2019 - 20

7

Wirral 2020 - 21

2

Feedback from Young People

Feedback from young people using Youth Justice Services
This year we've been asking young people to tell us about their experience of being supported by Youth Justice Services.
Here's some of their feedback:

My worker helped me to recognise my behaviour upset my family, especially my mum

I learned what was wrong with what I did, and what I can do to prevent doing it in future

Emotional help,
Changed my behaviour

Just keep doing what you are doing as it helped others and helped me

My worker helped me to recognise my behaviour upset my family, especially my mum

Don't carry knives

I felt that I had a good experience, being able to talk to someone help a lot.

Getting caught at the beginning of my offending behaviour did me a favour



Feedback is really important as it helps us to learn and improve – make sure you have your say.

Support Available from our Youth Justice Services

Our staff in the Youth Justice Service are committed, care about what they do, and have lots of experience. They work with lots of other services and partners in Wirral to provide the best possible offer of support. Here are some of the activities and support on offer. We welcome new ideas, so let us know if there are things we're not already doing that would be helpful

- **Youth Offer** – Everyone can have an induction
- **In the Zone** – 6 sessions on ASB, knife crime, exploitation and more
- **Safer Schools** – Activities in schools to promote safety
- **To the Edge** – Film clips, discussions and team building
- **Mentors in Violence** – Supporting each other for safer lives
- **Voice Groups** – Join Wirral's Youth Voice or SEND Youth Voice Group



Staying Safe and Staying Well

We understand that life has been very different throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and sometimes it's been much harder than normal. For everyone in contact with our Youth Justice Services, please remember that your support worker, even if they're not able to see you in person, is still there for you and can be contacted via phone calls e-messages.

If you require additional support, there are other ways to get help. Here are some that might be useful:

24 hour mental health helpline. Open to anyone including children and young people.

Call: **0300 303 3972**

If you want to speak to someone who is local and works in Wirral, call our dedicated **Helpline for Children and Young People on 0808 196 4147**

Text SHOUT to 85258 for a free confidential 24/7 support service for anyone feeling overwhelmed. This service is staffed by trained volunteers who will work with you to help you work towards feeling better

For more information on support services and issues you may be worried about, visit the children and young people's pages on Wirral's Safeguarding Children Partnership.

www.wirral safeguarding.co.uk/childrenyoung-people



Key Contacts & More information

Youth Justice Service Manager, Service Manager: Kathy Gill
kathygill@wirral.gov.uk

Volunteer Coordinator and Youth Voice
carlloughlin2@wirral.gov.uk

For more information on the Youth Justice Service in Wirral visit:
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-reduction/youth-offending-service>

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 September 2021

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2024
REPORT OF:	SIMONE WHITE – DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report presents the Children, Young People and Education Committee with the School Improvement Strategy 2021-24.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most challenging emergency the Borough of Wirral and the Council has responded to in recent times. The nature of the pandemic saw the Council and education settings react at speed to implement Government policy and local priorities to limit the spread of the virus, protect the health of all our residents and ensure that our children and young people could continue to access education.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of young people and our educational institutions cannot be underestimated and it is essential that we now focus on a new era of change and support moving forward.

The local authority is committed to provide schools with an enhanced school improvement service offer, in recognition of the reduced offer of school improvement, given the need to divert resources to focus on dealing with COVID.

This School Improvement Strategy as attached at appendix 1 sets out the Council's vision and ambition around school improvement. It forms part of a wider multi-factorial Education Strategy which will provide a new transformational and holistic approach to education across all areas, including early years, social care, early help and beyond.

The report and strategy are aligned to proposed priorities of Wirral Council's Plan 2026. -Brighter futures for all regardless of their background.

This is a key decision.

This matter affects residents across the borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the School Improvement Strategy 2021 – 2024;
2. Note the approach taken and ongoing support given to the school system by Wirral local authority; and,
3. Agree to receive an update on the progress towards implementation of the Strategy in 12 months.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Children, Young People and Education Committee has a role to play in ensuring that the local authority and partners are working collectively to improve outcomes for children and young people across Wirral local authority. The School Improvement Strategy 2021-2024 provides an opportunity for the Committee to understand the actions being taken to support schools across the local authority and seeks endorsement for the actions being taken.
- 1.2 The local authority has a statutory duty “to promote high standards so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential” as set out within the Education Act 1996. This Strategy provides the framework through which those responsibilities will be fulfilled.
- 1.3 The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruption to children and young people’s education and forced re-prioritisation of resources to respond accordingly. It is important, as the Council transitions out of ‘response and recovery’ from COVID-19, to articulate a clear and robust plan to work collaboratively with schools to support improvements in attainment and pupil learning outcomes. This Strategy seeks to respond to the challenges presented from COVID-19, providing the necessary support and critical friend challenge to drive improvements and enable young people to achieve their aspirations.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Do nothing: The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the current operations of school improvement and the self-improving system. Failure to articulate a clear plan moving forward presents a risk that the system may become fragmented and impact on the positive relationship between schools and the local authority.
- 2.2 Produce a wider Education Strategy: The School Improvement Strategy is the building block as part of a wider Education Strategy. It is important, in the current context, that it stands alone to demonstrate the importance of progress which needs to be made in this area. Including plans around school improvement within an overarching Education Strategy would potentially dilute the focus and priority of work needed in this area.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The School Improvement Strategy 2021-2024 sets out the local authorities plans to secure and deliver a high-quality school improvement service to all schools, which is appropriate and relevant to meet their need. It will form part of an overarching

Education Strategy for the borough which will cut across many other organisational areas such as social care and health.

3.2 The Strategy sets out a vision for school improvement to: *raise aspirations and improve outcomes for all children in Wirral*. It aligned to the proposed Wirral Plan 2026 and the priority to secure brighter futures for all regardless of their background. It outlines activity which is structured around the following themes:

- **Leadership and governance:** Effective school leadership is critical in improving educational outcomes, promoting high expectations and meeting the rigorous demands of Ofsted and the Department for Education. The School Improvement Strategy set out plans to empower headteachers, governors and senior leaders to build leadership capacity, secure better teaching and learning and deliver whole-school improvement.
- **High Support, High Challenge:** The local authority has a role to monitor, challenge and, where necessary, intervene in maintained schools. The Strategy sets out a plan to build on the current banding process and develop a prioritisation model which allows for school improvement support to be coordinated appropriately. This will also include setting out a transparent Schools Causing Concern policy, where early-stage monitoring and challenge do not result in rapid improvement.
- **Self-improving school system:** Strong governance and accountability is essential to success of an effective self-improving system and effective collaboration and partnerships provide the foundations for this. The Strategy outlines how the local authority will work with key stakeholders to develop a robust self-improving system which enables schools to hold each other to account for progress and performance and quality assurance measures which assess the impact of partnership activity.
- **Learning and innovation:** There is huge value in using evidence-based learning to inform professional practice and organisational decision-making. Research and evidence have a significant role to play in informing practice in schools and in school improvement. The Strategy outlines plans to ensure that our future schools and education leaders utilise effective improvement strategies based on evidence-based research whilst also having opportunity to explore innovative solutions to complex problems.
- **School Improvement Wirral:** The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the provision of a dedicated school improvement function to perform effectively. Transitioning out of the pandemic will enable resources to increase capacity in the School Improvement Team, appointing permanent school advisors to enable

the local authority to fulfil its duties in monitoring performance and brokering school improvement provision

- 3.3 It is anticipated that the Strategy will take three years to deliver and to allow for new systems and activity to become embedded. In the first year, the development of the School Improvement Service will enable capacity to drive forward and co-ordinate robust governance arrangements and networks to allow the self-improving system to become effective.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from the report. Delivery of the Strategy will be funded through existing resources. This will be via ringfenced funding through the Monitoring and Brokering Grant.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no significant legal implications arising out of the report. The local authority has a statutory duty to “promote high standards so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential” as set out within the Education Act 1996. There is other statutory guidance and legislation which align with this strategy including *‘Schools Causing Concern: Statutory Guidance’*. All relevant guidance will be considered and adhered to in delivery of the Strategy.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Resource identified will increase capacity within the School Improvement Team to deliver on the priorities and actions outlined in the Strategy. The appointment of School Advisors to broker and co-ordinate support for schools will provide the infrastructure to enable the local authority to fulfil its duties. Further capacity will also be commissioned through school leaders and assurance partners.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is a risk that the capacity in the School Improvement Team will not be realised and/or that applicants to the School Advisor and Assurance Professional roles may not meet the essential criteria. This could impact on the timeliness of delivering the Strategy and/or the ability to effectively support all schools equitably across the borough. This risk can be mitigated by engaging proactively with potential candidates to secure interest in the roles and to ensure that the recruitment process is professional and customer focussed.
- 7.2 There is a risk that the relationship with schools may become compromised, impacting on the ability to effectively develop new governance and locality arrangements which provide the framework for the self-improving school’s system. This can be mitigated by engaging with schools from the outset in any new governance proposals, seeking their views and involvement.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 A draft plan on a page was developed prior to the finalisation of the written Strategy and shared with various stakeholders including:

- School headteachers
- School senior leadership teams
- Children's Senior Leadership Team
- Senior managers within Children's Services
- Education partners

Feedback and views following these engagement sessions were considered and proved useful in formulating and developing plans to move forward.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

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

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no significant environment and climate implications. The School Improvement Team will play a role in supporting schools with curriculum development, where this is needed and appropriate. A rich curriculum respects and acknowledges the need to promote and understand the impact of climate change and promote positive attitudes to protecting the environment. The School Improvement Team will play a role in promoting it as part of positive learning for children and young people.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Strategy intends to create a system of improvement which exists within Wirral leaders and schools. Plans to strengthen the school improvement offer will seek to recruit from local leaders where possible and create further opportunities for local system leaders. Another important element of the Strategy is embedding an approach to succession planning through robust training and development programmes for current teachers and deputy headteachers so that they can supported to become Wirral leaders of the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Wirral School Improvement Strategy 2021- 2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Education Act 1996](#)

[Schools Causing Concern Guidance](#)

[Wirral Schools Strategy](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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Wirral School Improvement Strategy
2021 - 2024

FOREWORD

Councillor Wendy Clements, Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee



The Children, Young People and Education Committee has responsibility, together with the Director for Children, Families and Education to ensure fair access to a diverse supply of good schools and secure access to high quality educational activity.

As Chair of the Committee, I am delighted therefore, to introduce this School Improvement Strategy which marks the start of a new and reinvigorated strategic focus on education.

The past year has showcased the creativity, commitment and professionalism from the teaching profession and highlighted the role of schools as pivotal in our communities.

We must harness our efforts and continue our endeavour to support young people's learning and life chances, embedding effective and holistic support which is rooted in evidence learning and inspired by collective system change.

This School Improvement Strategy articulates clear plans to:

- create the right conditions for sector-led school- to-school support
- ensure that local authority can fulfil its duties through a new School Improvement Wirral Service
- develop plans to intervene and prevent/reduce escalation or risk in line with statutory responsibilities

Fundamental to the success of this Strategy will be the vital partnerships between schools, the local authority, governors and wider stakeholders, who, with clear vision and shared desire can support learning outcomes for Wirral's young people.

James Backhouse, Assistant Director - Education



I am proud to have been appointed to the Assistant Director for Education in March 2021.

There are many, many excellent schools in Wirral – over 80% rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Our schools provide security, quality curricula and enrichment opportunities which help children and young people to thrive.

As a parent living in Wirral, I have first-hand knowledge of how the pandemic has disrupted children's education. As Assistant Director, I have been astounded by the effort and determination of our school leaders, staff and wider support officers who have worked tirelessly to put measures in place to ensure that learning can continue during the most challenging times.

I am determined to transition out of the pandemic with a reinvigorated approach to school improvement and to make sure that schools have high support and high challenge to enable them to continue to improve and ensure that outcomes for children and young people remain positive.

This three-year Strategy sets out our plans to secure and deliver a high-quality school improvement service to all schools, which is appropriate and relevant to meet their need. It is the first step towards developing an overarching Education Strategy for the borough which will cut across many other organisational areas such as social care and health.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has been the most challenging emergency the Borough of Wirral and the Council has responded to in recent times. The nature of the pandemic saw the Council and education settings react at speed to implement Government policy and local priorities to limit the spread of the virus, protect the health of all our residents and ensure that our children and young people could continue to access education.

This required a remarkable effort by schools in partnership with the local authority, all who worked tirelessly and acted with compassion to protect, support and educate our children.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of young people and our educational institutions cannot be

underestimated and it is essential that we now focus on a new era of change and support moving forward.

The local authority is keen to build and harness the positive relationships and collaborative working with education settings and wider education partners which materialised because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The local authority is also committed to provide schools with an enhanced school improvement service offer, in recognition of the reduced offer of school improvement, given the need to divert resources to focus on dealing with COVID.

This is firstly to support schools in responding the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's education and secondly to demonstrate the Council's

value and importance on working proactively with schools and education settings to improve educational outcomes over the next three years.

The appointment of a new Assistant Director for Education will help to create the right environment and provide good leadership across the education landscape to drive an effective self-improving school system and create a culture of quality and constructive critical friend challenge.

This School Improvement Strategy sets out the Council's vision and ambition around school improvement. It forms part of a wider multi-factorial Education Strategy which will provide a new transformational and holistic approach to education across all areas, including early years, social care, early help and beyond.

ABOUT WIRRAL

Wirral is one of the largest metropolitan boroughs in England. It has a current population of 322,796 (48.4% Male/ 51.6% Female) which is set to increase by 3% to 334,500 in 2040. The area is rich in natural beauty with 24 miles of coastlines, 50 miles of rural walking routes and cycling areas and some of the best parks and green spaces in the country – boasting 30 green flags.

Wirral has areas of affluence and high deprivation. Almost two-thirds of the population live in the east of the borough, where levels of deprivation are higher. It also has a diverse make up in terms of age, with a relatively higher older population and a low proportion of people in their twenties and thirties.

Strategic Vision

Wirral Council and its partners have a vision to create *Equity for People and*

Place: To create equity for people and place and opportunities for all to secure the best possible future for our residents, communities and businesses. This is articulated in the borough's five-year plan which sets out a set of key priorities to create:

- A thriving and inclusive economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all
- A clean-energy, sustainable borough, leading the way in tackling the environment crisis.
- Brighter futures for all regardless of their background.
- Safe and pleasant communities that our residents are proud of.
- Healthy and active lives for all, with the right care, at the right time

Education Context

There are 379 settings that provide childcare and early education. There are 90 primary schools and 19 secondary schools. Wirral has 10 special schools, one

hospital school, one all-through school and a virtual school.

Attainment and Progress (2019)

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult to fully evaluate education attainment and progress.

At the end of the 2019/20 academic year, primary schools shared their Key Stage 2 outcomes based on teacher assessments, given that there were no exams during that year. This has allowed comparison nationally and regionally. However, an element of caution will always remain on the results.

4.1 Phonics

4.2 For 2019/20 academic year, outcomes for all pupils in phonics increased for the second year by 1% to 82%. Wirral schools' phonics results are now in line with emerging national data. Northwest ranking has improved significantly from

23/23 in 2017 to 5/23 in 2019. Funding from the School Improvement Fund (SIF) of £800,000 to improve outcomes in phonics resulted in a 4.5% increase in phonics results in over 21 schools.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In 2019/20, the percentage of children attaining a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the age of 5 declined by 1.1% to 69.5%. GLD for Wirral schools is now 3% below the emerging national average. Wirral ranks 9th out of 23 Local Authorities in the Northwest. The variance in GLD outcomes between schools in Wirral has increased and several schools have dropped by 15 - 20 percentage points.

Key Stage 1

Performance in Key Stage 1 is below the national average. In 2019/20, 60.8% of children at the age of 7 attained the expected standard in Reading and Writing and Mathematics combined (RWM) compared with 65% nationally.

4.8

Key Stage 2

Outcomes in Key Stage 2, Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined for 2019/20 remained the same as the previous year.

KS2 (RWM)	2016	2017	2018	2019
Wirral	49	57	60	60
National	54	61	64	65
GAP to National	-5	-4	-4	-5

Overall performance is below the national average. Historically Wirral has performed well in reading and writing at Key Stage 2 but reading outcomes dropped. In 2018, 74% of pupils attained expected level in reading and 76% in writing. 2019 results declined both nationally and in Wirral. Wirral's performance in Reading dropped to 69% and writing outcomes decreased by 1%. Mathematics outcomes improved by 4% compared to an increase nationally of 3% so narrowing the gap to 4%.

Key Stage 4

All the key measures at Key Stage 4 remain positive. Performance in Progress

8 and Attainment 8 remains above the national average. At Progress 8, Wirral is second in the Northwest, 0.05 above the average. Wirral is 1.5% above the average at attainment 8 and ranked 4/23.

KS4 Progress 8	2017	NW rank	2018	NW rank	2019	NW rank
Wirral	0.01	4/23	0.03	2/23	0.01	2/23
National	-0.03		-0.02		-0.04	
GAP	+0.04		+0.05		+0.05	

% Ebacc 5+	2017	NW rank	2018	NW rank	2019	NW rank
Wirral	28	2/23	24	2/23	21	2/23
National	21		17		17	
GAP	+7		+7		+4	

The number of pupils in Wirral achieving 4+ and 5+ in English and Maths improved in all areas in 2018. For those achieving 5+ in Maths, this improved performance continued in 2019 with Wirral above the national average and 4th in ranking against other Northwest authorities. Whilst performance in the other areas declined

slightly in 2019, Wirral remains above or in line with the national average and compares favourably against regional neighbours. The performance decline in 4+ Maths can be attributable to one secondary school where there was a significant decrease.

English 4+	2017	NW rank	2018	NW rank	2019	NW rank
Wirral	78	4/23	80	3/23	77	5/23
National	76		75		75	
Maths 4+	2017		2018		2019	
Wirral	71	6/23	73	4/23	69	8/23
National	69		70		70	
English 5+	2017		2018		2019	
Wirral	64	5/23	65	4/23	63	5/23
National	61		60		60	
Maths 5+						
Wirral	49	3/23	51	4/23	50	4/23
National	49		49		48	

Key Stage 5

KS5	2017/18	2018/19
Average point score per entry (APS)	32.1	34.7
Best 3 A Levels as a grade	B-	B-
AAB	17.2%	20.4%

In 2018/19 nearly a quarter of all pupils achieved AAB grades at A' level. The average points per A-level increased and there was an increase in the percentage of pupils achieving AAB (by 5.5%) but the overall grade for the best three A levels remained the same (B-).

Wirral has performed better than the national average consistently for three years.

5. Inspection judgements

5.1 84% of Wirral settings are rated as Good or Outstanding. None are judged inadequate. Prior to lockdown in March 2020, 18 inspections of schools were carried out compared with 23 in 2018-19 and 39 in 2017-18. No schools were judged to be in Special Measures. Three schools were downgraded with one infant school unexpectedly downgraded from outstanding to requires improvement.

5.2 Four schools in total (two last year and two this year) have had Section 8 inspections graded as 'good'.

Partnership arrangements

The COVID-19 pandemic strengthened communication between the local authority and education settings. Regular communication channels were established through weekly meetings with primary, secondary, and special school headteachers and a weekly discussion was held with the Director for Children, Families and Education. This communication system ensured that information was channelled effectively. Schools responded positively with one headteacher reporting that schools have "felt supported and well-led during this unprecedented time".

School Ofsted inspection reports have recognised the positive relationship between the local authority and schools.

Wirral Plan Vision: *Equity for People and Place: To create equity for people and place and opportunities for all to secure the best possible future for our residents, communities and businesses.*

Wirral School Improvement Vision: To raise aspirations and improve outcomes for all children in Wirral	
Conditions for effective school improvement*	Evidence
Clear and compelling vision	Through this Strategy, we want to co-ordinate and provide strategic push and to clarify roles and responsibilities within complex education landscape.
Trust and high social capital	We will build a model for effective relationships and partnership working. We have a shared values and desire to find solutions.
Engagement from schools and academies	We want to get everyone on board with this Strategy. We want to reach out to schools, academies and MATs with a good offer for all local children.
Leadership from key system leaders	Wirral System Leaders are effective in working constructively with schools manage risk and drive improvement.
Crucial convening and facilitative role for the LA	This Strategy sets out how the Council will fulfil its convening and facilitative role in school improvement.
Sufficient capacity for school-to-school support	Additional capacity now being channelled to school improvement and to facilitate effective school-to-school support.
Effective links with regional partners	The local authority has strong links with regional partners and insight organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation.
Sufficient financial contributions	Additional funding has been identified to enable the School Improvement Service to be appropriated and effective.
Structure to enable partnership activity	The Strategy sets out plans to review and refresh partnership activity to build effective structure for partnerships and accountability.

*LGA "Enabling School Improvement" Research into the role of local authorities in supporting local school improvement systems

Leadership and governance

Effective school leadership is critical in improving educational outcomes, promoting high expectations and meeting the rigorous demands of Ofsted and the Department for Education.

We know that having great leaders can help create great teachers and that having great teachers is a significant factor in successful outcomes for children and young people.

We want to empower headteachers, governors and senior leaders to build leadership capacity, secure better teaching and learning and deliver whole-school improvement.

It is essential that we can offer excellent professional support and training, appropriate career pathways and opportunities and fewer obstacles to recruitment and retention.

Over the next three years, we want to:

Theme 2:

- Develop an extensive and holistic Continued Professional Development programme offering a range of training and development opportunities to strengthen leadership at all levels. We intend to align this programme with the Teaching School Hub, exploiting the benefits and opportunities this brings.
- Increase the capacity of System Leaders within Wirral so that their knowledge and expertise is more targeted to thematic areas or role profiles. We hope to identify system leaders to focus on emerging education priorities, for example, in the first year, we will identify System Leaders for Mathematics and Early Years.
- Provide support and challenge to

middle leaders as part of intelligence-led succession planning so that we can develop aspiring headteachers and deputy headteachers of the futures to transition seamlessly into leadership roles.



- Develop a programme of support to improve subject specific curriculum knowledge and teaching expertise.
- Build an enhanced support offer for school governors, starting with an effective recruitment campaign to fill vacant positions and promote and deliver a robust governor training offer led through our partner, Edsential.

High Support, High Challenge

The Council has responsibility to ensure that schools provide high quality educational experience for children and young people. We must monitor, challenge and, where necessary, intervene in maintained schools.

It is essential to have a timely and effective prioritisation process in place which will allow for early identification of schools where targeted or intervention support is required.

The current school banding process has been effective in identifying 'at risk' schools with the potential of being downgraded by Ofsted and where targeted activity and system leadership support has helped to mitigate and manage challenges and drive improvement.

We want to build on the current banding process and develop a prioritisation model which allows for school

improvement support to be coordinated appropriately.

Where early-stage monitoring and challenge do not result in rapid improvement in maintained schools the local authority will consider using its intervention powers in line with DfE guidance: *Schools causing concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018)*.

Our plan is to:

- Establish a model and pathway for prioritisation which utilises insight, data, and intelligence to provide a thorough understanding of school's position across Wirral. This will involve considering information from education standards and inspection outcomes and quality



information provided through direct quality assurance work.

- Embed a prioritisation model (overleaf) which aligns effective school improvement support from the dedicated School Improvement Service and utilises effective partnerships both locally and regionally to address concerns.
- Develop and implement a 'Schools Causing Concern' policy aligned to statutory guidance but which meets local needs and reflects current partnership arrangements.
- Embed a banding system which will allow for early identification of schools or areas where targeted support is required. This banding will be coordinated around the following criteria:

Proposed Banding Criteria

Band 1 Criteria

- ❖ Evaluated as good or outstanding with strong capacity for improvement with the ability to deliver support other schools.
- ❖ Led by highly effective system leaders and governors with the capacity to support other schools and undertake outreach work.
- ❖ Self-evaluation is robust and accurate.
- ❖ Outcomes consistently compare well to national standards and has good value-added scores including those of vulnerable groups of pupils.
- ❖ Provision for all groups of learners, including gender, disadvantaged and SEND is good or outstanding.
- ❖ Teaching at all key stages is effective and the school's curriculum meets the needs of its pupils.
- ❖ Safeguarding is effective.

Band 2

- ❖ Currently judged as 'good' or 'outstanding' but is highly likely to be judged 'RI' if inspected or evaluated by external consultants.
- ❖ Judged to be requires improvement in its last inspection.
- ❖ There are some concerns about leadership and/or governance.
- ❖ Performance outcomes are close to national standards but there has been a decline in pupil performance over time
- ❖ There are concerns around attendance, behaviour, viability, exclusions, complaints, governance, HR or finance have been identified.
- ❖ Vulnerable groups may not be effectively supported, and teaching and learning is inconsistent.
- ❖ Any initial concerns around attendance, behaviour, exclusions, complaints, governance, HR or finance may have been identified that require close monitoring.
- ❖ Safeguarding is effective.

Band 3

- ❖ School is considered high risk and vulnerable: - Judged to be 'requires improvement' (RI) by Ofsted for the last two inspection – judged as serious weaknesses or special measures or at risk of being judged serious weaknesses or special measures
- ❖ Leadership capacity is limited
- ❖ Standards do not compare well to those nationally over a sustained period
- ❖ There are significant concerns around attendance, viability, behaviour, exclusions, complaints, governance, HR or finance
- ❖ Vulnerable groups may not be effectively supported, and teaching and learning is inconsistent
- ❖ Complex weaknesses have been identified which may include leadership/governance, behaviour and teaching and learning
- ❖ Safeguarding is ineffective and there are concerns.

Theme 3:

Self-improving school system

We know that strong governance and accountability is essential to success of an effective self-improving system.

Effective collaboration and partnerships provide the structure for good governance and accountability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the operation and delivery of the current governance arrangements for the self-improving school system. Capacity to maintain the current infrastructure was compromised by the pandemic, where resources had to shift and flex to deal with emerging issues and manage challenges.

This has allowed time to reconsider and reflect on the current arrangements and move forward with a reinvigorated approach to build on what works well.

We want to work with key stakeholders

to develop clear structures and systems for holding each school to account for progress and performance and quality assurance measures which assess the impact of partnership activity.

In the next year, our plan is to:

- Review the current self-improving system governance arrangements including role, scope, and membership of the School2School Partnership Board and Locality Boards.
- Outline clear roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in school improvement.
- Establish an effective strategic Board which discusses, analyses,



and develops approaches to deal with challenges, disseminate good practice and ensures a key focus on key priority areas such as disadvantaged groups.

- Develop an accountability framework through which effective school clusters/Locality Boards can engage, led by a more robust strategic governance group to oversee and lead support.
- Ensure that our self-improving system is underpinned by evidence-based best practice, opportunities for improvement and identify challenges, opportunities and risk providing constructive critical friend challenge.

Self-improving school system

School Improvement Partnership Board (name to be agreed)
(Headteachers, Local authority, Diocese, Regional Schools Commissioner)

Schools and education settings

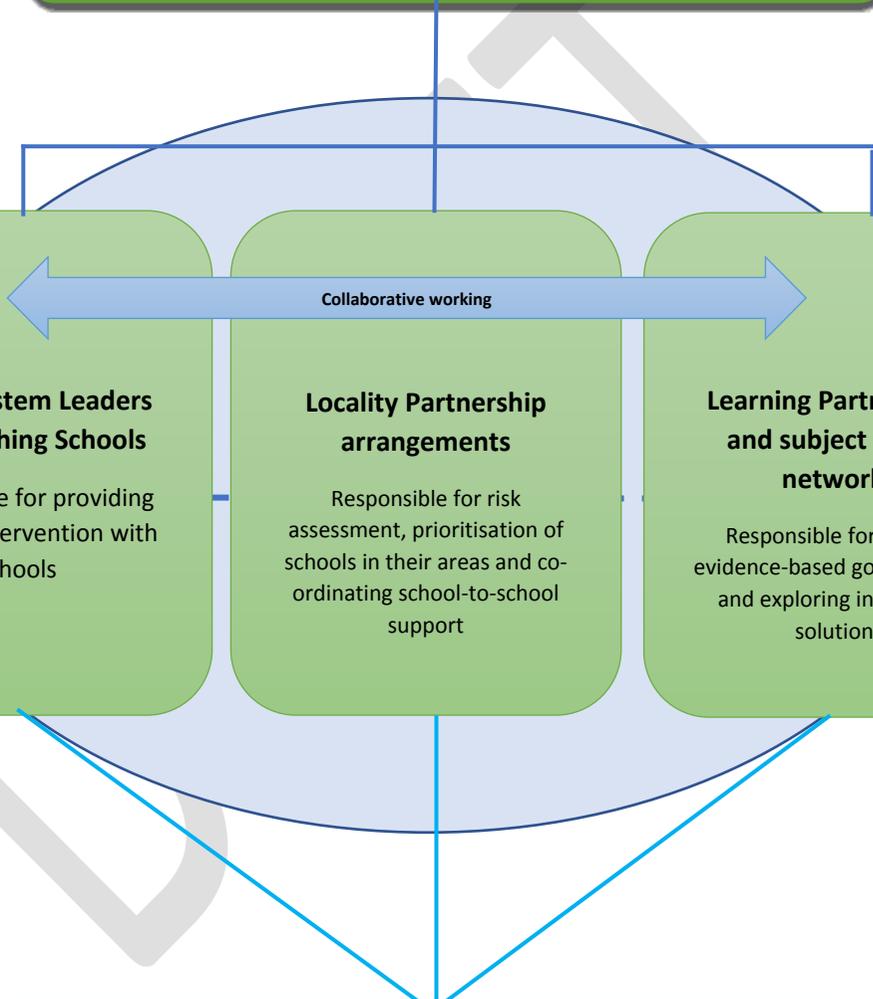
Wirral System Leaders and Teaching Schools
Responsible for providing support/intervention with schools

Locality Partnership arrangements
Responsible for risk assessment, prioritisation of schools in their areas and co-ordinating school-to-school support

Learning Partnerships and subject leader networks
Responsible for sharing evidence-based good practice and exploring innovation solutions

Local and Regional partners, Alliances, networks and organisations

School Improvement Wirral



Theme 4:

Learning and innovation

There is huge value in using evidence-based learning to inform professional practice and organisational decision-making. Research and evidence have a significant role to play in informing practice in schools and in school improvement.

School leaders can play a critical role in making schools evidence-based by using research themselves to inform their own decision-making, by promoting research use more widely within their school and by involving their school in studies which contribute to the evidence base in education.

Over the past few years Wirral has developed and established strong relationships with evidence-based learning organisations on a national and regional footprint to strengthen the areas understanding and knowledge and support schools to implement effective strategies based

on evidence of what works.

We have also benefited from learning from pilot initiatives and in learning from innovative approaches to improving attainment and pupil outcomes as well as wider strategies to address attendance, narrowing the gap etc.

We want to ensure that our future schools and education leaders utilise effective improvement strategies based on evidence-based research whilst also have opportunity to explore innovative solutions to complex problems.

In this regard, our plan is to:

- Create new collaborative learning partnerships within the framework of the self-improving system focused on priority



areas e.g., subject areas/narrowing the gap etc.



- Create an innovation programme allowing schools to access resources and funding as part of local innovation improvement work
- Appoint thematic specialists with skills, knowledge and experience on subject matter or specialism e.g., early years, literacy, curriculum etc.
- Cement and/or establish relationships with local and regional knowledge networks including the Education Endowment Foundation (already major partner), the Teaching school hub (Ignite), Mathematics Hub and English Hub.

Theme 5:

School Improvement Wirral

The local authority has a statutory duty “to promote high standards so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential” as set out within the Education Act 1996. Dedicated funding is provided from Government for local authorities to allow them to continue to monitor performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision, and intervene as appropriate.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the provision of a dedicated school improvement function to perform effectively. Previous changes to structural arrangements had also limited the operations of the service.

Transitioning out of the pandemic will enable resources to be reinstated towards school improvement, underpinned by the delivery elements outlined within this strategy to provide the framework and priorities for moving forward.

We are committed to providing a School

Improvement offer which will

- a) establish strong partnerships and a sustainable self-improving school system
- b) increase system leadership capacity and expertise and knowledge across the sector; and
- c) establish a robust accountability framework which monitors and assess quality and performance through assurance processes.

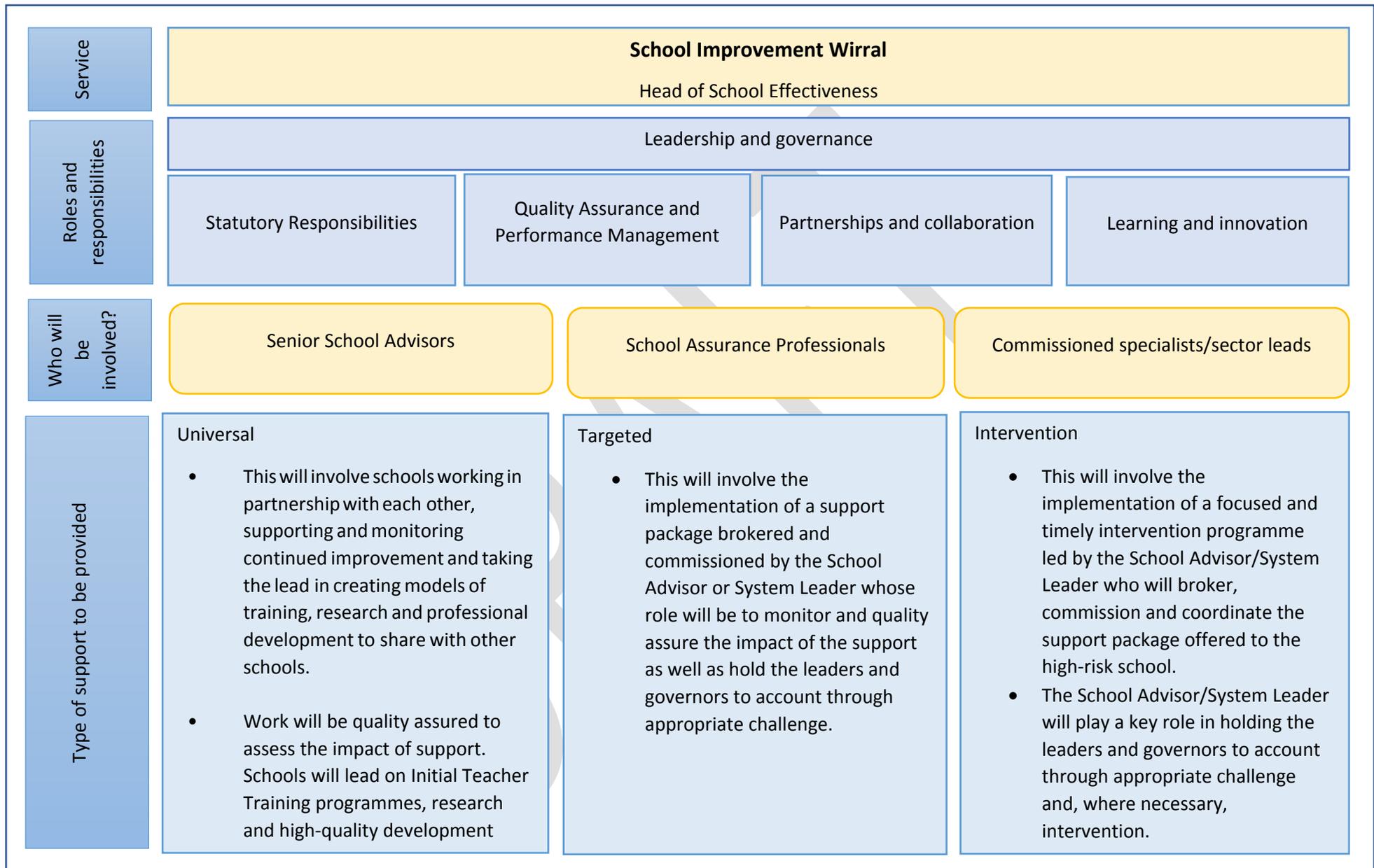
To do this, our plan is to:

- increase capacity in the School Improvement Team, appointing permanent school advisors to enable the local authority to fulfil its duties in monitoring performance and brokering school improvement provision.
- embed a quality assurance and performance management



framework across the sector through more robust partnership arrangements and the commissioning of school assurance partners to quality check practice and feed into the prioritisation (banding) process for support.

- use a new prioritisation process to identify schools early where intervention and support is required, considering a wide range of key indicators.
- operate a meaningful and balanced system of support around three levels: universal, targeted and intervention.
- create new opportunities for schools to engage in improvement activity and/or commission new activity around key themes/priority areas where this is required.



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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 September 2021

REPORT TITLE:	BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 1
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the financial monitoring information for the Children, Young People & Education Committee as at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22. The report provides Members with an overview of budget performance to enable Committee to take ownership of their specific budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

The Committee is accountable for ensuring that the budgets remain within the relevant funding envelope and will take collective responsibility via the Policy and Resources Committee to ensure that the whole Council budget remains in balance at all times by, should a deficit be forecast, agreeing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People & Education Committee is recommended to;

1. note the forecast year-end revenue position balanced forecast, as reported at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22;
2. note the progress on the achievement of approved savings and the year-end forecast position at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22;
3. note the reserves allocated to the Committee for future commitments; and
4. note the forecast year-end capital position of £4.970m favourable as reported at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the revenue and capital budgets, reserves, savings, and achievement of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) position enables decisions to be taken faster, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of Wirral Council.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other reporting frequencies could be considered, but quarterly reporting is standard practice.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Revenue Forecast Position

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the projected year-end revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of financial year 2021/22.
- 3.2 As at the end of June 2021 (Quarter 1), the forecast year end position for Children, Families and Education shows a balanced forecast position.
- 3.3 The service continues to manage demand with financial pressures being mitigated by in-year cost savings and use of specific related reserves. In-year employee cost savings across the service have mitigated contractual cost pressures and contributed to the overall balanced position. The forecast position reflects delivery of most of the 2021/22 saving proposals.

TABLE 1 2021/22 Children, Families and Education – Service Budget & Forecast

	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance		Adverse/ Favourable
			(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Children and Families	49,028	49,028	0	0%	
Early Help and Prevention	12,490	12,453	37	0%	Favourable
Modernisation and Support	5,032	4,846	186	4%	Favourable
Schools - Core	12,718	12,941	-223	2%	Adverse
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	79,268	79,268	0	0%	
Support / Admin Building Overhead	7,324	7,324	0	0%	
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	86,592	86,592	0	0%	

3.4 **Children and Families:** A balanced forecast position is reported for 2021/22.

External funding of £0.338m has been secured by officers to support the delivery of specific initiatives that are expected to deliver both financial and service delivery benefits in future years and contribute to managing service pressures.

The budget for this service includes £24.416m of care costs. Care costs reflect the demand led services and has been budgeted and forecasted with a 5% demand increase compared to 2020/21. The situation will be closely monitored, and the impact of any significant growth will be reflected in future outturn reports. Additional expenditure to support unaccompanied asylum seekers is forecast as it is likely that the number of unaccompanied asylum seekers needing support will increase but it is expected at this time that grant income will be sufficient to cover the associated costs.

3.5 **Early Help & Prevention:** A favourable forecast variance of £0.037m is reported for 2021/22.

The favourable variance is mainly due to variations to pay scale points and employer on-costs. The circumstances that drive these variations are subject to change and the staff costs savings are non-recurring.

3.6 **Modernisation and Support:** A favourable forecast variance of £0.186m is reported for 2021/22.

The £0.186m favourable variance is mainly due to variations to pay scale points and employer on-costs. The circumstances that drive these variations are subject to change and the staff costs savings are non-recurring.

3.7 **Schools – core:** An adverse forecast variance of £0.223m is reported for 2021/22.

There is an adverse forecast variance of £0.520m in relation Schools PFI which is due to the on-going annual costs that are being incurred in relation to the non-operational status of the Kingsway School building. This has been partially mitigated by the underspend of £0.259m against Teachers historic pensions costs where the actual reduction in on-going commitments is greater than expected. Further general cost savings across the service of £0.038m have resulted in a total operational adverse variance of £0.223m.

TABLE 2 2021/22 Children, Families and Education – Subjective Budget & Forecast

	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance		Adverse/ Favourable
			(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Income	-18,941	-19,421	480	3%	Favourable
Expenditure					
Employee	40,241	39,646	595	1%	Favourable
Non-Pay	33,552	34,352	-800	-2%	Adverse
Cost of Care	24,416	24,691	-275	0%	Adverse
Total Expenditure	98,209	98,689	-480	0%	Adverse
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	79,238	79,268	0	0%	
Support / Admin Building Overhead	7,324	7,324	0	0%	
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	86,592	86,592	0	0%	

TABLE 3 2021/22 Children, Families and Education – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance		Adverse/ Favourable
			(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Schools Block	117,102	117,102	0	0%	Favourable
Schools Block De-delegated	1,560	1,560	0	0%	Favourable
Central School Services Block	2,153	2,117	36	2%	Favourable
High Needs	43,874	44,877	-1,003	-2%	Adverse
Early Years	21,644	21,820	-176	-1%	Adverse
Total Gross Surplus / (Deficit)	186,333	187,476	-1,143	-1%	Adverse
DSG Income	-189,016	-189,010	-6	0%	Adverse
Movement in DSG Reserve	2,683	1,534	1,149		
Total Net Surplus / (Deficit)	0	0	0		

3.12 **Schools Block:** A balanced position is forecast for 2021/22.

Schools Block expenditure is in line with budget as year-end variances against schools' DSG allocations are offset with the schools' ring-fenced balances.

- 3.13 **Schools Block De-delegated:** A balanced position is forecast for 2021/22. De-delegated funds are a deduction from a school's budget share and are held centrally to fund relevant services. No variances are expected at this time.
- 3.14 **Central Schools Costs:** A favourable forecast variance of £0.036m is reported for 2021/22. Central Schools Costs relate to central functions carried out on behalf of maintained schools and academies e.g., School Admissions. The favourable variance is mainly due to short term staff vacancies.
- 3.15 **High Needs Block:** An adverse forecast variance of £1.003m is reported for 2021/22. The adverse forecast variance is mainly due to an increase in demand and complexity. In particular, SEN additional resources are expected to overspend by £1.542m in line with the increase in requests for EHCP assessments. The cost pressures are partially mitigated by cost savings of £0.449m elsewhere in the High Needs block.
- 3.16 **Early Years:** An adverse forecast variance of £0.176m is reported for 2021/22. The adverse variance is due to additional expenditure to help providers to make reasonable adjustments in their settings for children with disabilities. The costs have been offset by use of unspent Disability Access Funding from prior years and which has been set-aside in the DSG reserve for this purpose.
- 3.17 **DSG income:** An adverse forecast variance of £0.006m is reported for 2021/22. The adverse variance relates to an unexpected reduction to the DSG allocation relating to an alternative provision out of borough placement.
- 3.18 **DSG reserve:** A £1,149m reduction in the planned contribution to reserve is reported for 2021/22. The 2021-22 budget includes a planned surplus of £2.683m in the High Needs Block that is to be carried forward into the reserve at the end of the financial year. Due to the forecast adverse variance of £1.143m, the amount available to contribute to reserve will reduce to £1.534m. The opening DSG reserve balance reflects a deficit position of £1.679m and this is expected to be mostly mitigated by the in-year £1.534m contribution to reserve leaving a closing deficit position of £0.145m.

Budget Saving Achievement Progress

- 3.19 Within each Committee's revenue budget there are a number of savings proposals, that were based on either actual known figures or best estimates available at the time. At any point during the year, these estimated figures could change and need to be monitored closely so that, should an adverse position be identified, mitigating actions can be taken immediately to ensure a balanced budget position can be reported to the end of the year.

TABLE 4 2021/22 Children, Families and Education – Budget Savings

Savings Title	Agreed value	Forecast value	RAG Rating	Comments
Semi-independent living	£0.500m	£0.500m	Green	On target to be achieved
Pause Programme	£0.567m	£0.200m	Amber	The benefits of the pause programme are not expected to be fully realised in 2021/22. These have been offset by additional grant income, staff vacancies and payscale variations.
Modernisation & Social Care efficiencies	£0.102m	£0.102m	Green	On target to be achieved
Childrens containing demand pressure mitigation	£1.000m	£1.000m	Green	On target to be achieved
Explore reduction in Youth Provision	£0.100m	£0.100m	Green	On target to be achieved
YOS	£0.025m	£0.025m	Green	On target to be achieved
Total Savings	£2.294m	£2.294m		

- 3.20 £2.294m of savings have been identified for the budget to break-even in 2021/22. The forecast position at Quarter 1 assumes that 2.027m the savings will be achieved. The vast majority of the savings (£2,067m) relate to projects reducing the demand impact on the Social Care system such as the Pause Programme that works with women who have experienced - or are at risk of - repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. £0.127m relates to departmental efficiencies. A further £0.100m is to achieve sponsorship within the Youth Service.

Earmarked Reserves

- 3.21 Earmarked reserves are amounts set aside for specific purposes or projects.

TABLE 5 2021/22 Children, Families and Education – Reserves

Service	Opening Balance 2021-22 £000	Movement in reserves			Closing Balance £000
		Reserves Increase £000	Reserves Call Out £000	Total Movement £000	
Children, Families & Education	2,457	0	-141	-141	2,316
Schools - DSG	-1,679	1,534	0	1,534	-145
Total	778	1,534	-141	1,393	2,171

- 3.22 Children, Families and Education reserves reflect funds that have been set aside for specific projects and activities. Calls on these reserves for 2021/22 of £0.141m have

been identified in relation to a project reducing violence (£0.035m) and School Improvement to fund the enhanced service offer for 2021-22 (£0.106m).

- 3.23 Schools DSG reserve reflects a deficit balance which is mainly due to the cumulative effect of cost pressures from previous years. It is expected that a contribution to reserve of £1.534m will be delivered in-year thus reducing the overall deficit to £0.145m.

Capital Forecast Position

- 3.24 Capital budgets are the monies allocated for spend on providing or improving non-current assets, which includes land, buildings, and equipment and which will be of use or benefitting in providing services for more than one financial year.

TABLE 6 2021/22 Children, Families and Education – Capital Budget and Forecast

Capital Programme	2021/22			2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Budget £000	Budget £000
School Capital Grants:						
Condition/modernisation (SCA)	6,363	2,564	3,799	7,520	2,500	2,500
Basic Needs	1,288	600	688	688	0	0
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	33	33	0	796	0	0
Others:						
School remodelling and additional classrooms (School Place Planning)	937	500	437	437	0	0
Children's System Development	423	423	0	403	0	0
Family Support	157		157	157	0	0
Healthy Pupils Capital Fund	18	18	0			
High Needs Provision Capital		500	-500	547	0	0
PFI	85	0	85	85	0	0
Transforming Care - Short Breaks	0	866	-866	0	0	0
TOTAL	9,304	5,504	3,800	10,633	2,500	2,500

- 3.25 School Capital Grants:

- School Condition Allocation (SCA) - the purpose of this funding is to maintain and improve the condition of school buildings, so that children can learn in a safe and effective environment. The budget includes unspent funding from 2020/21 as a result of delayed work due to covid-19 restrictions. It is not expected that the full schedule of work planned to utilise all of the funding can be accommodated in 2021/22 and this will result in a favourable variance. Work that cannot be completed in 2021/22 will be re-scheduled for a future date.
- Basic Needs – the purpose of the basic need funding is to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools. This is un-ringfenced capital funding that is not time-bound, so that local authorities can make the best decisions for their local

area. The favourable variance relates to the remodelling of classrooms at St George's Primary as this work is not expected to take place in 2021/22 and will be re-scheduled for a future date.

- SEN and disabilities - Grant funded scheme to invest in providing new places or to improve existing provision for pupils and students with high needs across a range of different education settings. The adverse variance is due to work being undertaken earlier than expected and will be offset by the 2022/23 budget.

3.26 Children's Schemes:

- School remodelling and additional classrooms (School Place Planning) – the favourable variance is due to planned work being re-scheduled into 2022/23.
- Children's System Development – this project relates to the replacement of the CAPITA system.
- Castleway & Leasowe Early Years - this project relates to the relocation of Castleway Primary School to the Leasowe Early Years site. The project has been deferred to 2022/23 pending the outcome of the School Places Review and this will result in a favourable variance for 2021/22.
- Family Support – the final schedule of works for this project has been re-scheduled for 2022/23 and this has generated a favourable variance.
- PFI – this funding is allocated for potential works at PFI schools. No requirements have been identified dot 2021/22 this the finding will be carried forward into 2022/23.
- Transforming Care Short Breaks - The aim for Wirral Children and Young People's short breaks therapeutic facility is to provide a specialist service to deliver support to up to three young people, male or female aged 11-18 years who demonstrate complex and challenging behaviour. There is no budget for this project in the current capital programme and this has generated an adverse variance. However, the NHS are to contribute to the scheme and this will offset the adverse variance.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This is the revenue budget monitoring report that provides information on the forecast outturn for the Children, Families and Education Directorate for 2021/22. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to the Policy & Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget can be reported at the end of the year.
- 4.2 The Council have been offered exceptional financial support from MHCLG in order to balance its budget for this financial year. One of the conditions of receiving the support is that the Council must make every effort to reduce the value of this support. The Children, Families and Education Directorate is considering all aspects

of expenditure for this year to determine where it can contribute to reducing this support

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. This is in addition to the personal duty on the Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer to make a report, if it appears to them that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.
- 5.2 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. This is in addition to the personal duty on the Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer to make a report, if it appears to them that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.
- 5.3 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered, and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The possible failure to deliver the Revenue Budget is being mitigated by:
1. Senior Leadership / Directorate Teams regularly reviewing the financial position.
 2. Availability of General Fund Balances.
 3. Review of existing services and service provision.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The priorities in the Council Plan 2025 were informed by stakeholder engagement carried out in 2019.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.
- 9.2 There are no equality implications arising specifically from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Wirral Plan 2025 includes a set of goals and objectives to create a sustainable environment which urgently tackles the environment emergency. These are based on developing and delivering plans that improve the environment for Wirral residents. The performance report will include information on key areas where environment and climate related outcomes are delivered.
- 10.2 No direct implications. The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2020/21 Revenue Budget Monitor for Quarter Four (Apr - Mar)
- Revenue Budget 2021/22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan (2021/22 to 2024/25)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children's, Young People & Education Committee	15 June 2021
	11 Mar 2021
	15 Jan 2021



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday 13th September 2021

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of progress made to date on the development of a new performance reporting framework for Members of the Children, Young People & Education Committee. This is not a key decision.

There have been two significant areas of development over recent months, the first being the Performance Report which can be found in Appendix A. In addition to this, a new interactive Councillors Dashboard has also been developed using Power BI which will allow Elected Members to view data at Wirral or Ward level.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

1. Note progress made to date and the next steps involved in developing and rolling out a new performance monitoring framework
2. Note the content of the Performance Report (Appendix A) and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Children, Young People & Education Committee have the opportunity to monitor, review and challenge performance of the Council's Children's Services Directorate.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report has been developed in conjunction with the Chair of the Children, Young People & Education Committee and party spokes. Various options were considered before agreeing on a quarterly Performance Report, supported by automated Children's Services data reports.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Over recent months, there have been two significant areas of development:

- (1) The creation of a Power BI Dashboard for Elected Members, and
- (2) The development of a supplementary Performance Report

3.2 Power BI Dashboard

- 3.3 A dashboard has been developed using Power BI, the Council's business intelligence system. Power BI provides users with access to real-time data whenever they want to see it. It is an interactive tool that allows users to view data across Wirral or drill down to Ward level.

- 3.4 The dashboard has been structured around eight groups, each containing a set of indicators:

- 1) Demand
- 2) Keeping children safe
- 3) Looking after children well
- 4) Schools
- 5) Education
- 6) SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities)
- 7) Workforce
- 8) Budgets

- 3.5 Members of the Children, Young People & Education Committee were invited to attend a Power BI webinar on 25th August. The event provided Elected Members with an introduction to Power BI showing how to access and navigate around the system. Following the event, Elected Members were provided with a logon to the system.

- 3.6 The initial focus was to develop the 'Demand' and 'Keeping Children Safe' reports. Over the coming months we will further develop the dashboard by creating the reports that underpin the other indicator groups.

3.7 Performance Report (Appendix A)

- 3.8 In addition to the Power BI dashboard, a separate Performance Report has also been produced (Appendix A). Similarly to the Power BI Dashboard, this report has also been structured around the eight indicator groups.
- 3.9 The data contained within the Performance Report relates to Quarter 1, 2021/22 (period ending Jun-21). Where Quarter 1 data was not available, the most recent, up to date information has been provided.
- 3.10 The report also contains historic data and a trend line that shows direction of travel.
- 3.11 For each indicator group, there is also a supporting narrative that highlights any changes in performance or areas of concern.
- 3.12 Going forward, we will continue to improve the performance report by providing a more complete dataset and detailed explanations as to what action is being taken to improve performance in certain areas. We will also include benchmarking data so comparisons to England averages can be made.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's Corporate and Directorate Risks Registers are currently under review to reflect the thematic priorities of the Council's new Corporate Plan including the impact and recovery from Covid-19. Information on the key risks faced by the organisation and the associated mitigations and planned actions will be report to Committee once refreshed.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 A Performance Monitoring session was held with the chair of the Children, Young People & Education Committee, and party spokes on 4th March 2021 to review current performance monitoring arrangements and to define a new, improved approach.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity. There are no equality issues arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental or climate implications generated by the recommendations in this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Children’s Service Performance Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Data and performance information held in Children’s Services Management Information Systems and accessed via the Council’s business intelligence system Power BI.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People & Education Committee Children’s Services Performance Management	15/06/2021
Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2019/20 Q3 Wirral Plan Performance	17/03/2020
Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2019/20 Q2 Wirral Plan Performance	11/11/2019
Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2019/20 Q1 Wirral Plan Performance	25/09/2019
Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1) 2019/19 Q4 and year-end Wirral Plan Performance 2) Wirral Improvement Board Databook	03/07/2019
Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2018/19 Q3 Wirral Plan Performance	27/02/2019
Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2018/19 Q2 Wirral Plan Performance	13/11/2018

Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2018/19 Q1 Wirral Plan Performance	25/09/2018
Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2017/18 Q4 and year-end Wirral Plan Performance	03/07/2018

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

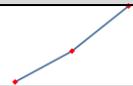
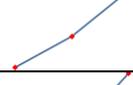
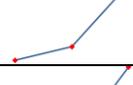
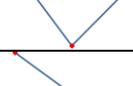
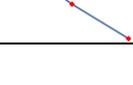
Monday 13th September 2021

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Children, Young People & Education Committee - indicator sets

Demand	Keeping children safe	Looking after children well	Schools
Education	SEND	Workforce	Budget (under development)

Demand

	2019/20	2020/21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Trend
Social care contacts	15086	10149	803	912	1072	
Early Help contacts	9973	12199	1085	1166	1044	
Referrals to social care	4005	3049	211	263	340	
% of domestic abuse referrals to children's social care	23.2%	23.5%	20.4%	21.7%	27.7%	
Child In Need rate per 10,000 population	369.0	381.6	367.4	360.7	376.4	
Child Protection rate per 10,000 population	41.9	47.1	49.9	48.7	49.6	
Children Looked After rate per 10,000 population	120.0	121.6	122.4	121.8	121.3	
Quality Assurance reports - audits on thresholds	Data to be provided in Q2					

Supporting narrative

During the month of June, 42% of the contacts to the Integrated Front Door were from the Police which remains consistent with May. Managing behaviour, parental substance misuse and child mental health are key features in the remaining contacts to Integrated Front Door.

Whilst conversion rates remain steady the increase in referrals to Level 4 services is a challenge as a result of current staffing capacity being at 45%. Additional, temporary resource has been brought in to ensure we can continue to support those who require help and support.

Current process in place to review children with multiple contacts that result in a consideration of progression to referral. This would be the case should the contacts differ in 'reason for contact' rather than multiple contacts for the same reason in quick succession. The Integrated Front Door Team Manager to put this as an agenda item at their next team meeting to ensure consistency of application.

Keeping children safe

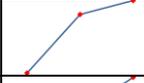
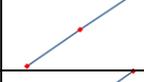
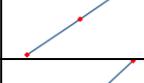
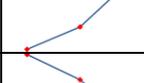
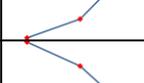
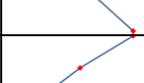
	2019/20	2020/21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Trend
% of Early Help cases closed with outcomes met	80.3	91.6	90.7	96.8	95.0	
% Repeat referrals within 12 months period YTD	27.6	23.5	18.0	19.6	20.5	
% Assessments completed within timescale	82.6	78.1	73.0	68.1	79.1	
Children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry Rate per 10,000 YTD	183	183.2	14.7	29.5	47.5	
% of children who were subject to a section 47 enquiry that led to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)	33.3	33.1	46.5	42.0	37.7	
% of single assessments that were complete within timescale (45 days)	82.6	78.1	73.0	68.1	79.1	
% Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) taking place in the month and within timescales	76.4	57.3	67.4	85.7	67.4	
Child Protection Plans ceased Rate per 10,000 YTD	75.8	51.3	3.9	10.8	16.3	
% of children on second or subsequent Child Protection Plan	19.4	27.4	31.8	32.5	10.9	
Audit - quality of Child Protection plans	Data to be provided in Q2					
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child in Need (CIN)	-	-	-	76.6	69.7	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Child Protection (CP)	-	-	-	81.0	79.0	
% of visits completed within statutory timescale - Children Looked After (CLA)	-	-	-	76.7	94.9	
Reduce First time entrants into the criminal justice system	254	219	-	-	-	
Reduce young people re-offending (%)	50	40	-	-	-	
Reduce the use of Custody (rate per 100,000)	0.30	0.07	-	-	-	

Supporting narrative

Despite staffing challenges, it is positive to note the percentage of assessments completed within timescales has increased. This will remain a focus of weekly performance meetings with team managers. Further development is ongoing to review assessments at different timescales to help reduce drift and delay.

The percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) held within timescale has continued to be impacted by capacity in respect of staffing numbers and sickness, with a significant number of staff leaving in June 2021 as anticipated. Additional, temporary resource has been brought in to ensure we can continue to support those who require help and support.

Looking after children well

	2019/20	2020/21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Trend
CLA - social worker stability	Report under development					
% CLA visits completed within timescale	-	-	-	76.7	94.9	
% Completed health assessment reviews YTD	87.0	86.8	1.8	11.3	20.4	
% Completed dental checks YTD	88.0	24.7	2.2	9.6	17.6	
% Completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) YTD	97.0	97.2	11.0	23.9	37.0	
% of CLA adopted in year	17.0	14.8	0.0	3.3	10.6	
% of CLA placed with Foster carers	70.5	70.8	71.4	70.8	69.7	
Timeliness of Adoption process A10 (426 days national target) Average days	590	356	0	290	1128	
% Care leavers in suitable accomodation (Age 19-21)	95.0	95.7	98.0	97.0	95.0	
% Care leavers in Education , Employment or Training (EET) (Age 19-21)	48.0	51.0	51.0	56.0	60.0	
Children currently missing	0	4	5	0	5	
Missing Episodes	1477	918	136	120	146	
% of CIN who are open to CAMHs service	Report under development					
% of CP who are open to CAMHs service	Report under development					
% of CLA who are open to CAMHs service	Report under development					
Average waiting time for CAMHs service	Report under development					

Supporting narrative

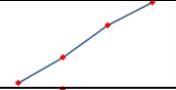
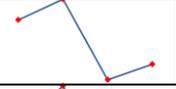
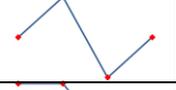
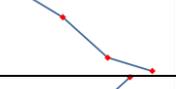
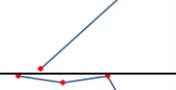
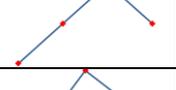
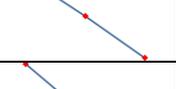
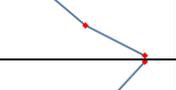
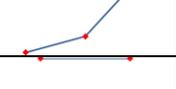
Wirral have taken two unaccompanied asylum seeker children in the past two weeks, with plans to be part of the north-west rota, which will further increase numbers of CLA in the locality by a small amount (2-5 children in the next few months)

Children looked after with two or more placement moves in last 12 months continues to fall which is welcome. An increase in care planning meetings, emphasis on working with carers around placement stability, and new approaches to support children's mental health and well-being are likely to be making the difference, and further analysis of what working in those areas is needed to drill down further

Children experiencing multiple placement moves will be added to the weekly performance reports for additional management and performance oversight on a biweekly basis

Overall performance is good in terms of compliance and further thematic audits into direct work are planned within the permanence service.

Schools

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1	Trend
% of school age pupils eligible for (FSM) Free school meal	19.5	21.5	24	25.8	
% of under 5's who are engaged with the Early Years Service	68	76	45	51	
% of under 5's who have sustained engagement the Early Years Service (3 of more)	60	62	58	60	
% of 2 year olds benefitting from funded early education	78	78	76	75	
% of 3 & 4 year olds benefitting from funded early education	98	96	93	92	
% School capacity - places available vs pupil numbers (school)	89.4	89.8	Available in Q2	N/A	
Overall School Attendance %	94.9	94.3	94.9	87.8	
Overall Unauthorised Absence %	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4	
Overall Persistent Absence %	12.6	15.9	14.0	N/A	
% Exclusions - fixed term	4.6	3.3	1.9	N/A	
% Exclusions - permanent	0.09	0.04	0.01	N/A	
Number of children known to be electively home educated	145	171	275	17	
Number of Pupils who are not in receipt of full-time education and subject of an agreed part time timetable (Indicator once named - Pupils who are missing more than 25hrs of education a week (CME25))	-	-	171	171	

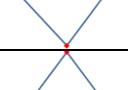
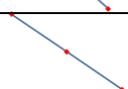
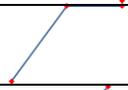
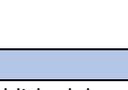
Supporting narrative

The percentage of children eligible for FSM increased quite significantly during the pandemic and with schools now able to complete the online FSM registrations themselves.

Pupil attendance rates declined nationally during half term due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. On 24/6/21, the national attendance rate was 87.4% (source: DfE) compared to 87.8% in Wirral.

The number of children removed from school roll at parental request to pursue Elective Home Education (EHE) continues to increase - we received 17 new EHE notifications from schools during Q1. We have strengthened our capacity to manage our statutory duties in respect of this cohort of children, and 3 additional EHE monitoring teachers are to take-up post in August 2021 on a part-time / casual basis. The Attendance Service liaises closely with colleagues in SEND with respect to children with EHCPs who are withdrawn from formal schooling by parents, and also with allocated

Education

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Trend
% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	57	60	60	-	-	
Progress 8 Score for Wirral	0.01	0.03	0.01	-	-	
% of schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted	85	84	85	83	83	
% of children in good or better schools as rated by Ofsted	87	84	86	84	84	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile	22	18	23	-	-	
% Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the 'expected standard' in English, reading, English writing and mathematics at the	22	23	22	-	-	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4	0.6	0.73	0.84	-	-	
Foundation Stage - % achieving a good level of development	69.4	70.5	69.3	-	-	
Foundation Stage - % of children who are looked after achieving a good level of development	N/A	70.5	69.3	-	-	
% of young people aged 16 and 17 who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or categorised as 'not known'	1.7	1.6	1.5	-	-	
% off early years settings good or better	90	94	96	98	98	
The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers achieving good level of development in early years foundation stage profile	N/A	17.7	23.5	-	-	

Supporting narrative

2016/17 and 2017/18 attainment data has been included for the purpose of demonstrating trend. There was no published data relating to 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the pandemic.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1	Trend
% Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 week timescale (Excluding Exceptions)	59.4	32.5	52.4	26.73	
% of requests that went to tribunal	5.14	7.63	9.47	9.23	
% of mediations that were followed by appeals to tribunal	60.9	32.4	21.3	90	
% of Children Looked After with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Pla	7.93	6.95	8.68	9.06	
% of Children In Need with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	15.75	14.12	17.59	16.01	
% of Child Protection with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	4.48	5.93	5.93	8.4	
% of Early Help Episodes with (SEND) Special Educational needs and disabilities	27.3	25.77	25.82	27.61	
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan- Overall School Attendance %	90.9	88.9	90.6	81.6	
(EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan Overall Persistent absence %	26.1	31.2	25.6	N/A	
Number of pupils with (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan who are electively home educated	9	10	18	4	
% of Children Looked After with (SEN) Special Educational Need supp	19.59	18.29	18.22	17.87	
% of Children In Need with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	14.73	11.66	15.83	16.01	
% of Child Protection with (SEN) Special Educational Need support	23.11	23.32	19.88	19.89	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall School Attendance %	92.9	92.3	93.4	86.7	
(SEN) Special Educational Need support - Overall Persistent absence %	20.8	23.8	19.3	N/A	
Number of pupils with (SEN) Special Educational Need support who are electively home educated	0	2	39	5	

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Trend
Key Stage 2 (RWM) Reading, Writing, Maths EHCP - % at Expected Level	2.9	6	2	-	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (EHCP) Education and Health Care Plan	-1.08	-0.85	-1.12	-	
Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing, Maths (SEN) Special Educational Need support - % at Expected Level	18	21	23	-	
Key Stage 4 Overall Progress 8 Score - (SEN) Special Educational Need support	-0.36	-0.29	-0.42	-	

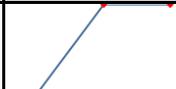
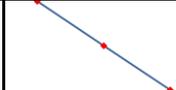
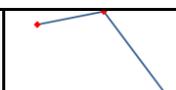
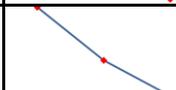
Supporting narrative

Performance in relation to Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) being completed within the 20-week timeframe has not improved. Recruitment is underway to appoint additional resource in the SEND assessment team along with locum support to address capacity within the Educational Psychology team. A SEND improvement plan has been produced aimed at addressing concerns with the service.

During Q1 there were 4 new EHE notifications for pupils who have an EHCP and 5 new notifications for pupils with SEN support. The Attendance Service liaises closely with colleagues in SEND with respect to children with EHCPs who are withdrawn from formal schooling by parents, and also with allocated Social Workers in respect of EHE children open to Children's Social Care.

2016/17 and 2017/18 attainment date has been included for the purpose of demonstrating trend. There was no published data relating to 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the pandemic.

Workforce

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Trend
Vacancy rate – number of posts currently vacant / total no of posts	24%	31%	31%	
Agency rate – positions filled by agency staff	19%	15%	11%	
New starters	Data to be provided by HR from Q2			
Retention of staff – number of leavers (particular focus on social workers)	Data to be provided by HR from Q2			
Average FTE days lost to sickness absence	15.89	16.75	10.88	
Average caseload for social worker	15.2	14.6	14.2	
Staff survey results	Data to be provided in Q2			

Supporting narrative

The data above relates to social care only. Work is underway to refine the reports so that going forward, we can report HR data for the whole of Children's Services.

We are experiencing a high vacancy rate in our social care teams. Additional, temporary resource has been brought in to ensure we can continue to support those who require help and support.

Budget
Supporting narrative

Under development - further work required to align performance and financial reporting.



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 September 2021

REPORT TITLE:	OVERVIEW OF 2019/20 COUNCIL LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE ADULT EDUCATION DELIVERY
REPORT OF:	SIMONE WHITE, DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This Lifelong Learning Service update report sets out the service’s developments, summary of delivery and learner achievements in the 2019/20 academic year (AY). The 2019/20 AY was the first full academic year funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA).

Grant funding received from the LCR CA was £982,326.

Wirral Council’s Lifelong Learning Service actively engages and supports local residents (aged 19+) who are furthest from the labour market. This education provision provides learners with the confidence to take the next steps back into education and employment. As a grant funded Council service, it has the capacity to support the most disadvantaged, working on difficult issues and using innovative approaches for example, supporting community cohesion, troubled families, Children’s Centres, family learning, refugees and improving mental health through learning.

The 2019/20 academic year was very challenging for the service with a significant change in course delivery required in March 2020. All courses moved to online delivery as the country went into its first national lockdown as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Lifelong Learning Service was inspected by Ofsted, February 2018, and assessed as ‘Good’. The service was also MATRIX re-accredited, July 2020, recognising its integrated high-quality delivery of careers education and support for its learners.

As a service, Lifelong Learning supports three of the key strategic Council themes, as outlined in the Wirral Plan 2025 (note: these are the same themes that will be included in the refreshed Wirral Plan 2021 – 2026, being considered at Full Council in September). These themes include (1) Brighter Futures through the delivery of high-quality education for adults and families, (2) Active and Health Lives through a curriculum focus on wellbeing and positive mental health, and (3) Safe and Pleasant Communities through targeted engagement of adults and families in the Borough’s most deprived communities / ward areas.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) support the services' planned improvements and recognises the contribution to improving the lives of adults in Wirral's more deprived communities during 2019/20.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Lifelong Service enrolled over 1,888 adults on a range of over 3,012 education provisions during 2019/20. Of those adults that enrolled on courses and workshops 55 percent were residents from Wirral's top 20 percent most deprived ward areas (identified using the indices of multiple deprivation index). Over 92 percent of those adults successfully completed their course or workshop. Over 54 percent of learner's post course either progress to further learning (at a higher level), undertook volunteering locally or enter employment.
- 1.2 The overall number of course enrolments during 2019/20 was negatively impacted by the national pandemic with a reduction of 1,379 or 31 percent. Learners enrolled prior to the first national lockdown were supported to complete their course by their Lifelong Learning Service tutor. New courses for the summer term (April to July 2020) were converted by tutors and curriculum leads to online application, enrolment, and delivery. A blended delivery model has carried forward in to the 2020/21 academic year with great success.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's Lifelong Learning Service offers entry and lower-level learning (up to level 2) which supports local employment and skills priorities and wider social and economic outcomes, as follows:
 1. Maximise the employability of Wirral residents through delivery of a range of programmes that support people to progress into work.
 2. Deliver learning and skills programmes that are responsive to Wirral employer and residents' needs.
 3. Deliver social well-being and economic outcomes.
 4. Deliver outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.
 5. Inspire and promote ambition for all learners to succeed and progress; and promote equality and diversity throughout all aspects of the learner journey.
- 3.2 In order for the Lifelong Learning Service to achieve the above priorities, the following objectives were implemented in 2019/20:
 - a. Implementation of a community-based learning offer that is responsive to local needs, recognising its importance to social and economic inclusion across the Wirral.
 - b. Development of clear and effective local progression pathways from non-accredited learning; to accredited learning, improve signposting and referrals, and measure impact and progression across Wirral and the Liverpool City Region, on to further education and/or employment/enterprise.
 - c. Offer targeted, local learning and skills provision that meets the current and future skills needs of Wirral employers.

- d. Focus our grant funding on people who are hard to reach, disadvantaged and least likely to participate.
- e. Maximize the funding, resources and sharing of practice through local partnership working and third sector commissioned provisions.
- f. Continually developing a universal community learning offer through a range of direct and commissioned (where appropriate) delivery.

3.3 2019/20 Service and Curriculum Developments

3.4 Learning in Deprived Communities Projects. For 2019/20 the Service subcontracted key provision to a range of providers, mostly Third Sector, to engage the hardest to reach in Wirral's more deprived communities. The providers include-Bee Wirral, North Birkenhead Development Trust, Ferries Families, Amber Button, Youth Federation, Wirral Environmental Network, Tranmere Rovers, Crea8ing Careers, 3D Training, Belvidere Centre, Earth Moves Cooperative and Next Chapter.

3.5 The projects focused on two main themes:

1. **Employability skills, Volunteering, and qualifications.** Offering a range of Entry, Level 1 (and where appropriate L2) qualifications, that supported adults seeking employment and/or access to the voluntary sector. The aim of the qualifications was to bolster an individual's CV, raise their aspirations and help them gain the skills that will make employment or volunteering an attainable prospect.
2. **Mental Health & Wellbeing.** Offering a range of courses that address issues of Mental Health, Mental Health awareness and Wellbeing *with a specific focus on recovery models*. The imperative being on encouraging and enabling learners to progress and develop through an understanding of their current situation and providing the tools for them to plan for their future.
3. **Across the two themes 744 number of learner enrolments were recorded 63% being from our top 20 percent most deprived wards.** In addition of the 744 number of enrolments 62 percent of the adults were not in employment.

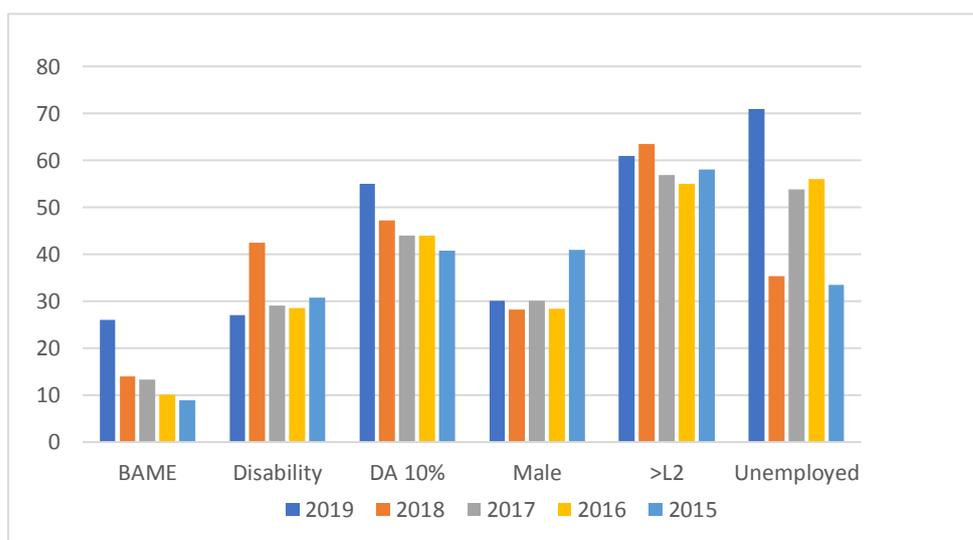
3.6 Working in true partnership with key third sector providers enables the service to add real social value through, (a) capacity building and engaging the providers in council adult education funded professional development and upskilling for their staff, (b) support and feedback with education delivery, and (c) financial capacity building through appropriately procured council funded delivery contracts.

3.7 Pre-vocational Curriculum. New entry qualification pathways were introduced in 2017/18 and built on in 2019/20. Learners start and engage with taster workshops in Sewing Skills, Sign Language, Gardening or Floristry and progress to non-accredited provision followed by an accredited Skills for Further Learning and Employment qualification. The qualifications are planned and delivered to meet specific local skills needs of residents. This type of skills provision supports pathways into lower and entry level jobs that are available across Wirral and the City Region. All courses include appropriate embedded English and Maths outcomes.

3.8 Digital Skills. Community Digital Skills have offered E-safety, Easy Steps, Level 1 Functional Skills IT and a new qualification, IT Fundamentals. Alongside this the service has also continued to offer E-safety training to foster carers.

3.9 Provision of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes. The service has always offered pre-entry, entry 1, 2 and 3 non accredited courses for ESOL learners but this key curriculum area has grown significantly in the last 4 years. The number of ESOL qualifications achieved in 2019/20 was 102. The table below illustrates the year-on-year percentage increase in Black and Minority Ethnic groups enrolling on adult education courses as a proportion of overall course enrolments.

Chart 1. Equality, Diversity, Impact Measure's (EDIMS) Comparative Data 5 year



(Source: TERMS Lifelong Learning System, 2021)

3.10 The ability to speak English is a skill required to secure employment, but it is also a fundamental part of improving integration and developing greater community cohesion. ESOL courses are designed for learners who are outside the labour market because of language and skills barriers, have little or no English skills, and want to develop their skills and confidence in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. This target group of learners may also be faced with literacy issues in their own language.

3.11 In 2019/20 the service continued to work in partnership with Refugee Action and DWP to support the Syrian Refugees Resettlement Programme. A significant proportion of the Syrian new arrivals are pre - literate in their first language so they are learning to read and write for the first time as adults in a new language as well as learning to speak the language. Additionally, the service has continued working in partnership with the Council's Minority Ethnic Achievement Service through a volunteering project aimed at supporting the Refugee families in schools.

3.12 English, Maths and Family Learning. Qualifications currently on offer include accredited English and Maths steppingstone units and awards, Functional Skills Maths and English level 1 and 2, Equality & Diversity Level 1 and Community Volunteering Level 1 and 2. The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 created a number of challenges as venues closed and digital access barriers emerged. A full explanation of how the service responded can be read in paragraph 3.19. The final

number of English qualifications achieved was 96 and the number of Maths qualifications achieved was 54.

- 3.13 In 2019/20 Family Learning was incorporated into the English and Maths curriculum area offering a clear pathway for parents to progress from a 2-hour non-accredited workshop to a full level 2 Functional Skill qualification. Family learning encourages family members to learn together as and within a family, with a focus on intergenerational learning. Family learning activities are specifically designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children’s learning. Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage. Adults often start their own learning journey through Family Learning. The number of families reached through Family Learning in 2019/20 academic year was 405.
- 3.14 The LCR Combined Authority provided additional funding through AEB for three innovative Test and Learn pilots. The pilots tested new methods of delivery not restricted to current qualifications or formularised rates of payment but tailored to delivery of provision to address skills needs more effectively in the Liverpool City Region.

Test and Learn Pilot	Number of Enrolments	Disadvantage ward - top 20% IMD	No quals at entry
ESOL	212	83%	69%
Digital	119	69%	46%
Literacy/numeracy	83	57%	38%

(Source: TERMS Lifelong Learning System, 2021)

- 3.15 Key developments and priorities for 2019/20. The LCR Combined Authority (CA), as devolved grant funders of the service, have established several broad priorities to help shape 2019/20 curriculum delivery. The LCR CA priorities are aligned to the Liverpool City Region Skills Investment Strategy priorities. The service has also shared and agreed a number of local priorities and an integrated delivery plan.
- 3.16 The LCR CA have asked LCR council Adult Learning Services and Further Education Colleges in receipt of the adult education budget (AEB) grant funding to prioritise the following: (1) adults aged 19-24, (2) adults aged 50- 59, (3) long term unemployed adults, (4) lone parents, (5) those adults with no qualifications and, (6) ex-military personnel.
- 3.17 Quality improvement priorities that have emerged following the self-assessment process using the newly revised Ofsted Education Framework for Learning and Skills include: (i) Curriculum intent, impact, and implementation, (ii) staff wellbeing, and (iii) learner progression and destination.

- 3.18 Response to the National Pandemic – Summer Term 2020. Given the Lifelong Learning Services engages with the most vulnerable in the more deprived ward areas and delivers face to face, the scale of the challenge in maintaining a service in a lockdown period was immense. All staff across the service from our business support officers to tutors rose to the challenge though, with great effect!
- 3.19 In summary, learner's mid-way through a course were supported online and via the telephone to successfully complete all outstanding assessments. New course provisions were developed, at pace, for online delivery with tutors working outside of their comfort zones and thinking very creatively.
- 3.20 Inclusion and access for several of our learners then became the next challenge. Classroom laptops were distributed and loaned to learners whilst further IT equipment was being purchased. A tender was also submitted to the Good Things Foundation for 100 tablets and WIFI access to support families in the more deprived communities. This tender was successful, and the kit was distributed to Wirral families seeking to engage in Lifelong Learning.
- 3.21 Learner enrolment and marketing approaches were also moved to online platforms following a very short period of development.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The LCR Combined Authority continued to fund Wirral in full during the pandemic and thus supports the basis on which the service was delivered which reflects the planned improvements. On that basis it is not expected that there will be a loss of grant funding and there will be no additional cost to Wirral from these proposals.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are no risks to the Council arising from this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The views and experiences of learners are captured by tutors at the end of every course and analysed by service managers. This important service user feedback is used to inform quality improvements and curriculum changes.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and published and can be found using the link below:

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Consideration of the climate emergency is intrinsic to Lifelong Learning in a number of ways from; for example, understanding healthy cooking and diet (reduced red meat, sugar, and salt), increasing a plant-based diet, to growing your own sustainable produce via a community allotment.

REPORT AUTHOR: Paul Smith
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email: paulsmith@wirral.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

LCRA AEB Funding Rules
LCRA Allocations 2020-21

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	28th January 2020



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 September 2021

REPORT TITLE:	EDSENTIAL UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The report provides members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an update on the work of Edsential, a community interest company (CiC) which provides high quality, ethical and innovative services to schools and families across the Northwest.

In summary, the report covers:

- a) Edsential’s achievements during 2020-21: this includes the delivery of the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF), #Edsentialathome and free school meal parcels.
- b) Current challenges: specifically the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation’s financial position.
- c) Strategic business plan priorities for 2021 – 2022: outlining key areas of focus to improve financial position and business direction.

A detailed overview of the information supplied by Edsential is attached at appendix 1.

The report also sets out Edsential’s commitment to meet the strategic aims of its partners and specifically how it’s work is aligned with the Council’s strategic priorities as outlined within the proposed Wirral Plan 2026. Appendix 2 provides further detail as to how Edsential intends to support and help deliver each priority within the draft Plan.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is requested to note the information contained within the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To ensure that members are updated on the recent activity, challenges and strategy moving forward for Edsential.
- 1.2 To provide members with an opportunity to seek clarity or assurance regarding the work and plans of the organisation.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 It is important that elected members in Wirral have oversight and assurance of the activity of its partners. This update report is important, particularly considering COVID-19, as it outlines the direct achievements and challenges of Edsential which have been experienced because of the pandemic. Failure to provide information and to set out plans may result in unintended assumptions and lack of assurance for key partners and stakeholders.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Edsential Community Interest Company was formed in 2015 and is co-owned by Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) and Wirral Council. Edsential provides high quality, ethical and innovative services to schools and families across the Northwest, with the strategic aim of improving outcomes for children.
- 3.2 The CiC works with 95% of schools in CWAC, Wirral and Halton, and directly delivers activities to over 80,000 children each year through core services of:
 - Learning Outside the Classroom
 - Physical Education and Swimming
 - Catering – providing catering to 63% of schools in CWAC and Wirral areas, providing 4,521,630 school meals last year.
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Music
 - Creative Arts
 - Governor Services
- 3.3 The organisation also has 6 Residential Outdoor Centres. Edsential are the leading provider for Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) in the North, with over 1,800 young people gaining a bronze, silver or gold award each year.

4.0 ACHIEVEMENTS 2020-21

a) Holiday Activity Fund (HAF)

- 4.1 In 2020, Edsential was successful in its bid to deliver the £1.8 million Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) from the Department for Education. Over 160 community, voluntary and faith sector organisations, along with schools, were funded through HAF to deliver:
 - Over 147,000 healthy meals and 97,000 family food and activity parcels.

- Over 155,000 activity-filled attendance days, with physical activities such as dance, yoga and adventure play, plus diverse enrichment activities including arts and crafts and forest school.
- Creative online provision, receiving over 76,000 user interactions

4.2 As a result, over 11,400 children benefited from free activities and nutritious food across West Cheshire, Wirral and Halton. Families were able to enjoy free, nutritious food and activities at a wide range of exciting clubs over the summer holidays. This was important at a time when such provision for young people and their families was needed more than ever.

b) #EdsentialAtHome

4.3 During the COVID-19 pandemic, Edsential introduced **#EdsentialAtHome**; a free weekly educational activity pack that could be downloaded by families and completed at home. Each week was centred around a different theme and had activities, using everyday objects and low-cost resources, around the following key areas:

- *Make and Create*: exploring the arts and cookery through a range of practical activities.
- *Time to Move*: PE and Dance sessions to keep moving indoors and out as well as healthy eating recipes for you to make at home to keep you well
- *Let's go Outside*: time to find out what is happening out your garden or in the street where you live.
- *Adventures at Home*: activities to encourage you to embrace adventure, challenge yourself and develop your character and to build your resilience, confidence and curiosity.

4.4 During 2020, over 3000 users accessed #EdsentialAtHome.

c) Free school meal food parcels

4.5 With just 24 hours' notice of the January lockdown, the catering team set up a process that produced 16,000 meal equivalents per week for the children of CWAC and Wirral. Over 7000 food parcels were dispatched to free school meal (FSM) children in the first two weeks of January 2021.

5.0 CHALLENGES

5.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has had an adverse impact on the organisation's financial position. For the year end to March 2021, the organisation reported a loss of £1,498k against an anticipated profit of £101k and therefore the business was £1,599k behind plan. Further details of the financial result for this period are set out within appendix 1.

5.2 Whilst it is not possible to accurately predict the financial position for the year end 2022, the latest working budget for 2021/22 has been calculated and compared with how the business would have been expected to perform if there was no COVID-19 impact in 2021/22. Whilst the budget is still draft and a work in progress an indicative result for next year is a circa £1.7m loss. Further details of the financial result for this period are set out within appendix 1.

5.3 The consolidated impact of COVID on the business has resulted in a £3.3m loss from April 2020 to March 2022. It is anticipated that future year on year budget positions would reflect previous performance levels, prior to COVID-19 and therefore no further significant losses occurring.

6.0 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN 2021-22

6.1 To move forward and recover from the financial impact of COVID within the existing dynamics of the schools' market, the key focus for Edsential over the next financial year will be:

- **Covid recovery and winning new business:** A particular focus will be retaining and growing residential centres, build a pipeline that returns use to historic levels quickly and then increase market share. New sectors will be targeted including Welsh schools and family activity days during school holidays. Geographic areas such as Greater Manchester that were traditionally served by centres which have closed will also be targeted.
- **Competitive cost base:** The organisation needs to increase its margins to enable accrued debt to be paid off within the agreed time. A range of options to control cost base will be explored to allow the full benefit of price increases to be delivered as increased margin.
- **Productivity improvements:** Improved productivity is key to reducing costs, and therefore maintaining (or achieving) competitive pricing. Productivity impacts will be explored across every service area – from increased chargeable time for tutors, to IT solutions to create administrative efficiencies.
- **Digitalisation:** One of the key drivers of growth and productivity will be effective digitalisation – enabling the organisation to be easy and accessible for customers and to deliver productivity gains to reduce cost. This will involve continued development of the website, launch of the new residential booking website and increased use of Cypad functionality in school kitchens and HR and Payroll applications.
- **Low-cost competitors:** The organisation is currently experiencing significant undercutting from competitors, particularly in respect of cleaning and catering services. This is primarily due to differences in terms and conditions for employees. Edsential will further explore options to manage its cost base, review current structures to enable it to better compete against low-cost competitors.
- **Greater partnership working with schools and education providers:** There is currently a shift in the tendering process for schools, welcoming competition from a wider range of suppliers with lower cost due to tightening school budgets and efficiencies. Ongoing support from local authority education teams and greater engagement with schools will be important in continuing to build Edsential's credibility and brand awareness.

- **Social value:** As a certified social enterprise, it is vital that customers understand the core purpose and values of the organisation. Its mission is to continue to deliver social value to school communities in many ways. Since it launched, Edsential has reinvested several million pounds back to schools and parents. Its reputation for being an ethical supplier is vital to the long-term growth potential for the business and achieving its aim as being recognised as the most ethical and best value partner a school can choose.

6.2 Underpinning the delivery of these priorities, will be the need to ensure adherence and respect for the values and priorities of both Wirral Council and CWAC. This would be in relation to education but also in relation to wider council priorities.

6.3 Appendix 2 sets out the contribution that Edsential makes to key elements of the proposed Wirral Plan 2026. The intention is to emphasise as fully as possible and reasonable, the value that the company brings. It is anticipated that Edsential would be willing and in a good position to support future council priorities where this is appropriate and acceptable.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This is an update report for information. There are no significant financial implications arising from this report. The report outlines the financial position of Edsential and further detail is provided within Appendix 1.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This is an information only report. There are no significant legal implications arising from the report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

9.1 There are no resource implications arising from the report.

10.0 RELEVANT RISKS

10.1 Risks for Edsential are outlined within the report and accompanying appendix.

10.2 There is a risk for the local authority if the CiC continues to accrue loss and is unable to secure an improved financial position. To mitigate this risk, it is important that as a partner, the local authority can work in partnership with Edsential to guide its financial planning and actions moving forward and that there continues to be monitoring and oversight at all levels.

11.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

11.1 Children's Services directorate has been engaged with ongoing discussions with Edsential and there are representatives from the Council on Edsential's management Board.

12.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

13.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As part of Edsential's response to the concerns of customers and the climate emergency declarations by shareholders, it has outlined its aspirations to become a sustainable business in the coming decades. The result has been the development of a "4 Cs Strategy" that will direct the business decisions moving forward.
- 13.2 The Strategy framework is linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and work has been undertaken to identify how to target specific SDGs within the overall framework.
- 13.3 Linked to this and to 'close the loop' with the Ethical Catering Strategy strategic partnerships have been created with Chester Zoo and the Orangutan Land Trust (OLT). The partnership with the OLT includes an ambition for Edsential to provide financial support, of up to £20k per year, for their reforestation and an animal wildlife corridor project in Indonesia. This is linked to curriculum activity to demonstrate to children that their choices can make a difference to this world. The agreement only allows for support to be given if Edsential meets its business plan commitments.

14.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Edsential prides itself on supporting local employment and growing local opportunities within Wirral. Since its establishment, Edsential has played a key role in providing local opportunities for people with a range of skills and in supporting growth in local schools. Part of its ethical strategy is to continue to focus on local wealth building as one of its overarching priorities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Report from Edsential
Appendix 2: Mapping Edsential Activities to Council Priorities

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Strategic Business Plan 2021-22

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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Report from Edsential

Edsential Community Interest Company formed in 2015 is co-owned by CWAC and Wirral Councils. Edsential provides high quality, ethical and innovative services to schools and families across the North West, with the strategic aim of improving outcomes for children. Edsential works in 95% of the schools in CWAC, Wirral and Halton, and directly delivers activities to over 80,000 children each year through core services of: Learning Outside the Classroom, Physical Education and Swimming, Catering, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Music, Creative Arts, Governor Services, and 6 Residential Outdoor Centres. Edsential are the leading provider for Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) in the North, with over 1,800 young people gaining a bronze, silver or gold award each year. Edsential provide catering to 63% of schools in CWAC and Wirral, providing 4,521,630 school meals last year.

Holiday Activity Fund 2020 and 2021

Over 11,400 children benefit from free activities and nutritious food across West Cheshire, Wirral and Halton. Families were able to enjoy free, nutritious food and activities at a wide range of exciting clubs over the summer holidays. Funded by the Department for Education, the £1.8m Holiday Activity Fund won by Edsential Community Interest Company was able to support over 11,400 children across local boroughs, at a time when such provision for young people and their families was needed more than ever.

Edsential and their local partners supported and provided funding for over 160 community, voluntary and faith sector organisations, along with schools, who jointly delivered:

- Over 147,000 healthy meals and 97,000 family food and activity parcels.
- Over 155,000 activity-filled attendance days, with physical activities such as dance, yoga and adventure play, plus diverse enrichment activities including arts and crafts and forest school.
- Creative online provision, receiving over 76,000 user interactions

In 2021 Edsential are co-ordinating the HAF provision across the 3 boroughs for the whole year, under the new HAF scheme that has been rolled out nationally.

Edsential At Home

We were delighted to introduce **#EdsentialAtHome**; a FREE weekly educational activity pack that could be downloaded and completed at home. Each week was centred around a different theme and had activities, using everyday objects and low-cost resources, around the following key areas:

- **Make and Create** – exploring the arts and cookery through a range of practical activities
- Time to Move** – PE and Dance sessions to keep moving indoors and out as well as healthy eating recipes for you to make at home to keep you well
- Let's go Outside** – time to find out what is happening out your garden or in the street where you live.
- Adventures at Home** – activities to encourage you to embrace adventure, challenge yourself and develop your character and to build your resilience, confidence and curiosity

Over 3000 users accessed Edsential At Home during 2020.

Free school meal food parcels

With just 24 hours' notice of the January lockdown, the catering team set up a process that produced 16,000 meal equivalents per week for the children of CWAC and Wirral. Over 7000 food parcels were dispatched to FSM children in the first two weeks of January 2021.

Strategy review

Edsential's strategy will be dominated by the need to recover from the financial impact of Covid within the existing dynamics of the schools' market. The key focus points for Edsential over the next financial year are:

- **Covid recovery and winning new business:** It is important that Edsential recovers pre-covid revenue levels across all service areas during 21/22, but particularly in future bookings for the residential centres. The goal is to build a pipeline that returns to historic levels quickly and then aims to increase our market share. New sectors will be targeted including Welsh schools and family activity days during school holidays. Geographic areas that were traditionally served by centres that have now closed will also be targeted.

All services have growth plans that focus on increasing the penetration of their services into our existing customer base as well as winning new schools in neighbouring authority areas. Residential targets the whole of England and is focused on entering large metropolitan markets, such as Birmingham and Manchester.

- **Competitive cost base:** The Covid debt burden placed on the company requires it to increase its margins to enable the debt to be paid off within the agreed time period. The company must therefore take steps to control its cost base and allow the full benefit of price increases to be delivered as increased margin.

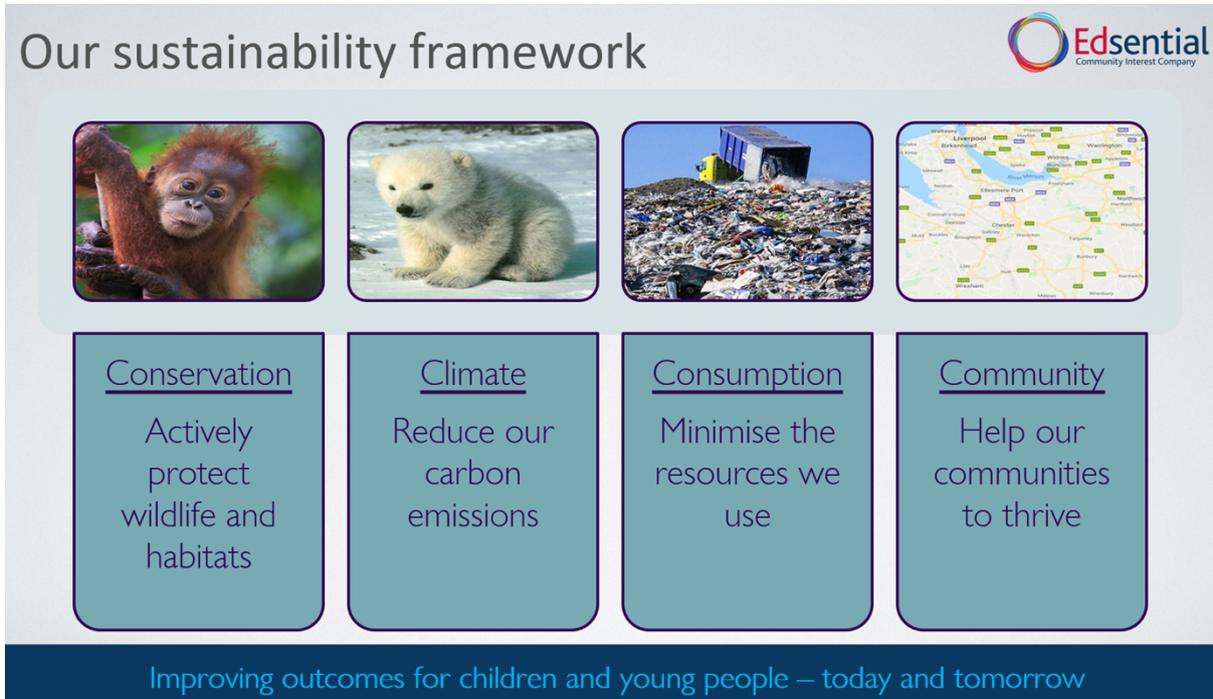
Edsential's costs are largely driven by direct employee costs, and our employee costs are high due to the local living wage and a very generous benefits package (defined benefit pension scheme, generous sickness cover, generous holidays). As stated previously, our existing T&C's do not reflect

standard industry practise in certain sectors – notably catering and cleaning – which are highly labour intensive and price sensitive, and the resulting price differentials between Edsential and its competitors result in an uncompetitive cost base in some sectors.

- **Productivity improvements:** improved productivity is key to reducing costs, and therefore maintaining (or achieving) competitive pricing. Productivity impacts are required across every service area – from increased chargeable time for tutors, to IT solutions for administrative efficiencies.
- **Digitisation:** One of the key drivers of growth and productivity is effective digitalisation – we need to be easy and accessible for our customers to deal with us, and also to deliver productivity gains to reduce our cost base. This specifically involves continued development of our website, launch of the new Residential booking website and increased use of Cypad functionality in school kitchens and HR & Payroll applications.
- **Low cost competitors:** We need to manage our cost base and structures to compete against our low-cost competitors. We are experiencing significant undercutting from competitors, particularly in respect of cleaning and catering services. These competitors undercut due to their lower staff costs, providing their employees with low (or no) contributory pension scheme and statutory sick and holidays. This undercuts Edsential's generous employee benefit package by a substantial margin, leaving our competitors with an immediate cost advantage in price competitive marketplaces.
- **Reduced school budgets and spending:** We are experiencing a key shift in the tendering process for schools, with schools opening tendering processes, welcoming a wider degree of competition from a wider range of suppliers, and being primarily focused on price as school budgets tighten. Schools are increasingly choosing lowest cost over quality, for example a recent school cleaning tender placed 80% of weighting on lowest cost. Some schools have taken catering in-house in the belief they can make a profit from it, the schools do not carry the risk or cost burden for the pension or regulatory compliance; this is transferred to the council without any cost or challenge. The schools do not adhere to any recognised quality or ethical standards (e.g. Red Tractor, Marine Stewardship Council or Soil Association) that cost a little more. The ongoing support from the education teams within both shareholders is important to building Edsential's credibility and brand awareness.
- **Social value:** As a certified Social Enterprise it is vital that our customers understand who we are and what we stand for. Our mission is core to everything we do and we deliver social value to our school communities in many different ways. Since it launched, Edsential has reinvested several million pounds back into the pockets of schools and parents. Our burgeoning corporate reputation for being an ethical supplier is vital to the long-term growth potential for the business, we need to be recognised as the most ethical and best value partner a school can choose.

Creating a sustainable business

As part of our response to the concerns of our customers and the climate emergency declarations by our shareholders, Edsential have fundamentally reviewed what it will take to be a sustainable business in the coming decades. The result has been the development of our 4 Cs strategy that will direct our business decisions moving forward:



We have linked the framework to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and have identified how we can target specific SDGs within the overall framework.



As part of the new framework and to 'close the loop' on our ethical catering strategy we have created strategic partnerships with Chester Zoo and the Orangutan Land

Trust. The partnership with the OLT includes an ambition for Edsential to provide financial support, of up to £20k per year, for their reforestation and animal wildlife corridor project in Indonesia. This is linked to curriculum activity to demonstrate to children that their choices can make a difference to this world. The agreement only allows for support to be given if Edsential meets its business plan commitments.

Financial performance and the impact of Covid 19

The table below sets out the draft financial result for the year to March 2021. The business has reported a loss of £1,498k against an anticipated profit of £101k and therefore the business is £1,599k behind plan.

Draft Year to Date Consolidated Management Accounts to March 2021:

SERVICE	Year To Date - March 2021		
	Budgeted Profit / Loss	Actual Profit / Loss	YTD Variance to Budget
Business Support	-2,137,269	-2,115,268	22,001
Catering	772,977	816,474	43,496
Cleaning	7,615	90,266	82,651
Culture	0	-8,687	-8,687
Education Curriculum	40,368	2,280	-38,088
Governors	50,922	63,788	12,867
Health & Wellbeing	261,913	241,570	-20,342
Music	395,854	214,370	-181,483
Residential	716,672	-802,342	-1,519,014
Mental Health	-7,730	0	7,730
TOTAL	101,321	-1,497,550	-1,598,871

Draft Budget for the year ending March 2022

As the level of financial support from the shareholders is unclear, we are not in a position, to conclude and present our final budget for the year to March 2022.

The table below sets out the latest working budget for 2021/22 and compares this to how the business would have been budgeted to perform if there was no COVID 19 impact in 2021/22. Whilst the budget is still draft and a work in progress an indicative result for next year is a circa £1.7M loss.

COVID is expected to have an adverse impact of £1.7M in the year.

SERVICE	YTD BUDGET - APRIL TO MARCH 22		
	Budgeted Profit / Loss	Budgeted Profit / Loss (No COVID)	Impact of COVID
Business Support	-2,184,481	-2,184,481	0
Catering	728,954	900,412	171,458
Cleaning	56,937	56,937	0
Culture	-15,681	-15,681	0
Education Curriculum	4,882	4,882	0
Governors	37,414	37,414	0
Health & Wellbeing	183,955	225,753	41,798
Music	208,391	267,761	59,370
Residential	-714,503	753,898	1,468,401
TOTAL	-1,694,132	46,895	1,741,027

The consolidated impact of Covid on the business has resulted in a £3.3m loss from April 2020 to March 2022. After this we anticipate the business will reasonably quickly return to historic performance levels.

Benefits delivered directly to our shareholders

Edsential is a mission driven organisation and we seek to improve outcomes for children and young people in everything we do. **Appendix A** contains a table highlighting the benefits Edsential provide to Wirral council's priorities.

In addition to the social value delivered every year, detailed in our impact reports, the shareholders have benefitted from the following financial returns:

Shareholder Related Party Transactions (taken from published stat accounts)			
	Cumulative Total		
	CWAC	WBC	Total
Purchases from Parent Undertaking	(5,564)	(2,359)	(7,923)
Interest payable on Loans from Parent	(262)	(265)	(527)
	(5,826)	(2,624)	(8,450)

The above table, based on our audited accounts, demonstrates that our shareholders received £8.5m in income from Edsential in the 4 years to March 2020.

In addition, Edsential brought £2.3m of central government funding to the area in HAF bid funding and funded £100,000 of school project through its grant fund. Combined, this represents £10.9m of cash income for our shareholders and their council tax payers since 2016.

Appendix 2

Mapping Edsential Activities to Council Priorities

When Edsential was created, part of the rationale was to help to ensure that the services that would be provided by the company would be delivered in keeping with the values and priorities of the two shareholder Councils. This would be in relation to education specifically but also in relation to children's services more widely and wider council priorities.

This document seeks to demonstrate how the work of Edsential matches key elements of the plans for both Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester Councils. The matching in the following tables is not necessarily exhaustive. There are also some Edsential activities that could appear against several priorities, but this would make the document even longer. The intention is to emphasise as fully as possible and reasonable, the contribution that Edsential makes to the two Councils and the value that the company brings.

It should also be borne in mind that Edsential would be in a position to try to support future council priorities in a way that private providers might not (and probably would not) whilst ensuring that the company remains competitive and a going concern.

Overall Council Priority	Council Objective	Contributing Edsential Activity	Impact
Sustainable Environment	Urgently tackle the environment emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worlds First Sustainable Palm Oil Company • Purchase of meat from a local farmer to reduce travel and emissions • Vegetarian menu one day a week to support UN recommendations • Strict food monitoring to ensure that there is minimal food waste • Services becoming aligned to a sustainability framework • Aim to use no plastic in catering by 2022 at the latest • Training, music tuition and governor meetings flexibly delivered online to reduce employee travel • Flexible employee working to reduce travel to the office 	
	Protect biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above, especially the Palm Oil initiative. This has supported many schools who have also 	

		engaged in curriculum projects with Chester Zoo and this has helped to raise the awareness of environmental challenges and the need to protect biodiversity	
Safe and Pleasant Communities	Protecting our most vulnerable residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded by the Department for Education, the £1.8m Holiday Activity Fund received by Edsential Community Interest Company was able to support over 11,400 children across local boroughs, at a time when such provision for young people and their families was needed more than ever. Families across west Cheshire, Wirral and Halton were able to enjoy free, nutritious food and activities at a wide range of exciting clubs over the summer holidays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 147,500 healthy meals and 97,000 family food and activity parcels. 155,904 activity-filled attendance days, with physical activities such as dance, yoga and adventure play, plus diverse enrichment activities including arts and crafts and forest school. Creative online provision, receiving 76,973 user interactions 82% of the children that took part this year were entitled to free school meals
	Engaging with communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holiday Activity Fund worked with a wide range of third sector and charity organisations Edsential delivers a Duke of Edinburgh programme in schools and an increasing number of Duke of Edinburgh volunteers supporting the local community 	
Active and Healthy Lives	Support more people with disabilities to live independent lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edsential operates the Champions Lodge (Delamere) and Mountain View (Anglesey) centres which were purpose built to provide respite facilities for disabled children and their families Appropriate outdoor education activities are provided for children and young people with disabilities 	
	Promote healthy active lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide comprehensive Learning Outside the Classroom opportunities to staff, governors, pupils, and parents. All of our 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training delivered to over 480 members of staff in schools across the North West. Over 1,000 pupils and parents attended Forest

	<p>provision has been designed to ensure that it has the most impact for schools' leaders and ensures maximum engagement with children to develop their love for learning. Delivery and training not only support core curriculum knowledge and application, but also support young peoples' social, emotional, and personal development. Outdoor learning allows young people to explore their boundaries, identify strengths and weaknesses, manage and take risks, build confidence, and creates an awareness and respect for themselves, others and the environment - leading them to become responsible citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsential manages the Local Authority Evolve Contracts for CW&C/Wirral/Cheshire East totalling £93,300 and this ensures that the Councils' statutory duties as residual employers in maintained school is satisfied 	<p>Schools, Family engagement and Orienteering sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolve off-site visits and guidance support offered for over 33,000 school visits. • 2422 visits approved via Evolve. • More than 216,000 approved visit days. • Development of Maths and English Outdoors courses for schools • Forest school delivery to young people
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsential's School Catering team provide children with healthy, affordable food choices that will help them perform well in school • Achieving and delivering compliance standards around food quality further supports positive standards on pupil behaviour which positively impacts behaviour and attainment • Evidencing a culture of healthy eating positively contributes to your schools OFSTED rating around personal development, behaviour, and welfare for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Edsential menus meet the "School Food Standards" and the "Food for Life Served Here" Bronze criteria, approved by the Soil Association ensuring the food on the plate is high quality • 23,000 meals per day over 150 schools – over 90% of every meal is created freshly in the kitchen • Family cooking school programme delivered to over 100 pupils

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPIs covering finance, service usage, health and safety and hygiene as examples help the company to monitor and report on performance, understand how we compare and our opportunity to continuously improve 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education, Sport and Health plays a vital role in enthusing and inspiring children and young people to participate fully and develop a lifelong love of physical activity. Our aim is to ensure every child leaves school physically literate, inspired, and enthusiastic about participating in physical activity and with the knowledge, skills and motivation to equip them to feel good about themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Best Programme supporting positive mental health through physical activity was delivered to 765 children across 23 primary schools. Following the programme, over 96% of children said they feel confident 'some' or 'all' of the time - an increase of over 100 children from before the programme. The programme aimed to increase resilience within the children. At the end of the programme, 99% of the children (757 children) said they feel they have the strategies to help them in difficult situations at least some of the time • From September 2019 – March 2020, we worked with over 10,200 children, 300 staff and 200 parents across a range of services and programmes. • Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over 4000 children taking part in our breakfast and afterschool clubs ○ Over 500 children accessing high-quality PE lessons every week as part of our PPA delivery

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over 800 children participating in a sporting competitive event or festival • Edsential competitions are designed to provide an inclusive atmosphere for all children of all age groups throughout the school year. There were 446 children who took part across the year from 19 different primary schools. Of these 446 children, 241 had never taken part in a 'competitive' event before. Over 50 'young leaders' from local high schools had the opportunity to referee and coach at one of the events across the year • 5000 online views from the 'Daily Challenge' during lockdown • Our staff delivered weekly PE and physical activity sessions to a group of 15 vulnerable children at one of our residential centres.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our school swimming team works with schools to provide the necessary support and training required to deliver high quality, structured swimming lessons for pupils, enabling schools to not only meet, but exceed their statutory expectations. Our team provide schools with an efficient and cost-effective coordination service that promotes a much-needed increase in the number of children who are leaving primary school as competent swimmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsential schools are on course for a significant increase in the number of Year 6 pupils meeting the national curriculum requirements. • In 2018/19 58% of year 6 pupils achieved all 3 aspects of the national curriculum. The current figure is already 62% and is expected to increase as more schools use top up sessions in the summer term March 2020. • 69% of our pupils leave primary school as competent swimmers (predicted figure for 19/20 academic year compared to less than 50% nationally)

	Reduce loneliness and social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support provided for lone workers 	
	Promote wellbeing and improve positive mental health		
	Help more people to live safe & independent lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family cooking school programme delivered to over 100 pupils and parents. The programme focuses on developing relationships, which impact the whole family. It provides a vehicle to bring children and families together to engage with each other away from everyday distractions allowing them to bond. It encourages children and families to challenge themselves and work together to learn how to cook. The course is designed to change eating habits and promote healthy eating. Equipping and upskilling our workforce Support schemes for employees, employee advice line Youth services support provision (Wirral - starting November 2020) 	
Brighter Futures	Invest in our children and young people and their future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edsential is a Community Interest Company and not-for-profit. In 2019/2020, Edsential returned £100k to schools in the form of a grant fund. There were 12 winning applications whose projects impacted 72 schools across CWAC and Wirral. The grant fund was allocated to projects that focussed on children and would leave an educational legacy 	
	Provide access to good education and opportunities for employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We remain dedicated to supporting schools in the provision of effective school governance to ensure that children and young people receive the best education in a stable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,223 meetings since September 2019 155 schools supported with clerking 360 online meetings during summer 2020

		<p>and thriving school environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This support is provided through information, advice, and guidance (via council briefings), a clerking service and training. Edsential also supports head teacher recruitment processes. These activities support the school improvement agenda in both councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1915 total of governors' meetings clerked in schools across Cheshire West & Chester, Halton and Wirral 69 admission appeals hearings supported 79 Schools bought back the Governor Training SLA Membership 39 New schools signed up to Governor Hub full subscription
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edsential acts as the Accountable Body for Newly Qualified Teacher processes in many schools across both councils. This is a statutory duty operated on behalf of the councils though funded by schools themselves. This involves a training programme, access to support and advice, and support for the observation and validation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 143 New NQT registrations over 84 schools
	Ensure that the children in our care are better off as a result of being in care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edsential has worked with Wirral Fostering teams to design and develop a programme to support fostered children 	
	Help children with special education needs or disabilities and their families to be and feel included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND at Edsential provides expanded provision across Special Educational needs, Disability, Behaviour and Mental Health and Wellbeing. The service supports inclusive practice and pupils with additional needs by providing consultation, advice, and training across a range of areas. Edsential provides the Postgraduate National Award for SEN Coordination on behalf of Manchester Met University to schools in Cheshire West and Chester and Wirral 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsential has provided regular support to over 40 schools each year • It has delivered 41 training sessions to support teachers in schools • It has directly supported 148 parents/carers of children with SEND • It has provided online videos to support parents with learning for children with SEND during Covid-19 lockdown 	
	Enable families to access the support they need when they need it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsential has provided support to enable children to receive food during lockdown, especially those most vulnerable • See also the Holiday Activity Fund programme 	
Inclusive Economy	Create jobs, support businesses, and attract ethical investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top quartile employer with excellent T&Cs • Payment of the Local Living Wage as a minimum • Regular training and development for employees with all staff undertaking safeguarding training, health and safety training and over 60% of staff hold a food qualification. All governor clerks receive national training • Recruitment of apprentices • Awards evenings and monthly awards to celebrate employees and acknowledge their work • Lone worker helpline • We support local businesses by using them to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meat from local butchers ○ Training venues ○ Swimming pools ○ Equipment maintenance at all catering and cleaning schools ○ Marketing ○ Vehicle hire and maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct employment of 926 people across Cheshire West & Chester and Wirral • Regular employment for approx. 40 self-employed staff

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Telecoms and IT solutions 	
	<p>Deliver an ambitious, high quality and inclusive culture events programme with impacts positively on civic pride and outcomes for residents as well as attracts visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsential delivers a high-quality music education that engages and inspires pupils to work together, embrace other cultures, explore emotions, build imagination, develop language skills, self-confidence and intellectual curiosity. • Edsential manages the Arts Council Music Grant of £1 million for the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5700 children and young people attended music ensembles • Edsential Musical Routes has worked with 260 schools to support or deliver music education programmes and activities • Over 5500 children had their first experience of learning to play an instrument free of charge in our 'First Access' programmes. • 6460 students have been taught on a weekly basis in 166 music classes (whole class instrumental teaching or curriculum teaching) • Edsential has supported 208 schools to teach Singing via curriculum teaching, teacher training and other vocal projects. • Created over 500 videos for First Access with 8 weeks of content across 12 instruments for pupils to access during lockdown. • 1209 young people accessed online tuition between March 2020 and September 2020 • Six weeks of summer holiday activities exploring rhythms from around the world called 'Groovin' Around the World' for the Holiday Activity Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 80 young musicians collaborated in a performance video playing and singing 'We'll Meet Again' to commemorate VE Day.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaps and Bounds is a £100,000 Grant funded by the Charity Youth Music. Specialist music tutors will have worked in 17 primary schools and their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported children's musical progress through prime and specific Early Learning Goals 	

	<p>linked nurseries across Wirral and CWAC with Foundation 1 and 2 teachers and practitioners with the aim to improve the learning outcomes for children at risk of developmental delay due to economic hardship by enabling active engagement in creative music sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased their individual participation in group and class creative music-making activities. • Developed their social competences, including language skills by listening to, participating in and performing music in their own and external settings • The Leaps and Bounds programme for early years has involved over 1,250 children and supported over 80 professionals.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edsential facilitates the Tuscany Arts Trip which supports the most able arts students across the two boroughs. Edsential has successfully attracted £5000 each year from the Erddig Trust to support disadvantaged children to attend the Tuscany Arts 	

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT TITLE:	THE PROVISION OF FOOD & ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL HOLIDAYS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – WORKING GROUP UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update further to the proposal agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee regarding the provision of free school meals (FSM) in school holidays during the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020.

This matter affects all wards in the borough. This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S -

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- (1) note the progress of the Provision of Food and Activities Working Group for Children in School Holidays during the Covid-19 Pandemic; and
- (2) ask that a report be presented to Policy and Resources Committee in the new year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for children to be able to access food and support activities during school holidays. A specific request was made by the Leader of the Council for a report to be taken to the Policy and Resources Committee to address two issues. Firstly, an urgent decision to agree the use of the Tranche 4 COVID-19 emergency fund (£200,000) to provide funding for Free School Meal eligible children between Christmas and the end of the Easter term 2021; this was agreed. Secondly, as the full impact of COVID-19 becomes clearer, for the Policy and Resources Committee to consider how best to meet the needs of children eligible for Free School Meals in the medium and longer term. The Children, Young People & Education Committee was tasked with progressing this.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the development of the approach for supporting children over the school holidays. This includes activity undertaken up to and including May half-term 2021, ongoing activity for the summer of 2021 and recommends next steps.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The option to not provide any targeted support to children eligible for Free School Meals over the school holidays was considered and discounted. Through the Council's Humanitarian Cell, created in response to COVID-19, agencies and third sector partners have been engaged in determining both emergency and sustainable approaches to food and other poverty, the impacts of which on households have been compounded by the pandemic.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The background to the approach and Council support provided so far, is set out in the report to Policy & Resources Committee of 11 November 2020 and updates have been provided to the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 1 December 2020 and 28 January 2021.
- 3.2 Further to the last report provided on 28 January 2021 (minute 33 refers) outlining the approach for Christmas 2020 and February half-term 2021, the DWP extended the Covid Winter Grant Scheme from 30 March 2021 to 16 April 2021, with a further allocation of £425,734 to Wirral. A portion of this grant was allocated to fund further activity to support Free School Meal eligible children over the Easter holidays (2021).
- 3.3 The project to support children over the three holiday periods noted above was evaluated and presented to the Provision of Food and Activities during the School Holidays Working Group. Co-ordinated by local charity Neo Community, on behalf of the Council, and working in partnership with over twenty local community-based organisations, 26,956 food hampers were provided to children and young people in total at Christmas (2020), February half-term (2021) and Easter (2021). These were school-age children eligible for Free School Meals and nursery age children and college age young people subject to certain criteria. In addition hampers were

supplemented with 20,175 activity packs at Christmas and Easter. A total of £685,291 was spent from the Covid Winter Grant Scheme/Covid Local Support Grant, supplemented with just under £200,000 from Covid Tranche funding for the activity packs and project management costs.

- 3.4 The Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) is funded by the Department for Education; Wirral has partnered with Edsential for the delivery of this programme and Neo Community Group is coordinating the project on behalf of the Council. The programme is focused upon providing enriching activities and food to children through face-to-face delivery. The aim of the HAF programme is to make free places available to children eligible for free school meals for the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week, 6 weeks a year.

4.0 PROVISION OF FOOD & ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL AND NURSERY AGE CHILDREN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – MAY HALF-TERM AND SUMMER HOLIDAYS

- 4.1 The DWP extended the Covid Winter Grant Scheme, renamed the Covid Local Support Grant, from 17 April 2021 to 20 June 2021, to align with the Government's Roadmap out of lockdown. This saw a further £288,145 allocated to Wirral. An Officer Decision was published on 20 April 2021 agreeing indicative spend for the further grant. This included a provisional allocation of £56,500 for a project co-ordinated by Neo Community on behalf of the Council to provide food to children in need of additional support during May half-term, plus £13,000 of project management costs for the various partner groups and organisations involved in delivery.
- 4.2 Whilst the previous approach adopted referenced in 3.3 above provided the required support to families, needed in part due to issues compounded by the pandemic, both the Council and its partners were mindful that further support must reflect the country's Roadmap moving forward out of the pandemic and avoid creating reliance on a temporary system that is not sustainable in the longer-term. It was noted that there was no corresponding provision through the Holiday Activity Programme (HAF) during the May half-term.
- 4.3 All schools were invited to identify their ten most in need Free School Meal eligible children to receive a hamper including fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, milk and bread (with recipe cards for parents/guardians and alternative options for specific dietary requirements). Additionally, ten 'hubs'/pick up points were created in community-based venues across the borough to provide 50 lunches per day for four days of the May half-term to support circa 2,000 children. This provision was consistent with that to be provided through HAF. This provision was accessible to nursery, school and college age children. 9,308 Hampers or lunches were provided throughout the May half-term at the cost outlined in 4.1 above.
- 4.4 The DWP Covid Local Support Grant has again been extended for a further period from 20 June 2021 to 30 September 2021, with a further £1,152,580.64 allocated to Wirral. An Officer Decision published on 8 July 2021 outlined proposed indicative spend of the grant, which is available to support those most in need with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other

essentials. The spend includes a range of projects to support children in need over the summer.

- 4.5 £300,000 has been allocated to support families in need with food hampers. Neo Community is co-ordinating the food provision element of the project on behalf of the Council. Building upon previous support provided through the school holidays and in order to mitigate the risk of reliance on temporary holiday support, a new project is running from 9 August 2021 for up to six weeks. Branded as the 'Summer Great Family Cook Off', this sees families in need of additional support (not just those who may have children eligible for Free School Meals) learn new cooking skills in an interesting and entertaining way, while also showed how to stretch the food budget to provide interesting meals; as well as helped with immediate welfare needs through the provision of nutritious food. This is supported with interactive step-by-step videos and a social media campaign.
- 4.6 £200,000 has been allocated to the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) to supplement the food element of the programme, which is expected to support up to 6,000 Free School Meal eligible children over the summer. This has enabled the release of HAF funding to be utilised later in the year enabling either a greater number of children and young people to be engaged and/or enhance the programme available.
- 4.6 £123,750 has been allocated to Welcome Back to School Food Support Packs, providing for food pantries for up to 75 schools to help children most in need at the start of the new school terms.
- 4.7 This targeted support is in addition to a total of over £300,000 of small grants allocated to community-based groups and organisations to provide food and essential supplies to households in need over the summer, also funded through the Covid Local Support Grant. Further support with food is available to households in need through a plethora of community-based providers across the borough, in addition to emergency support available through the Council 24/7.

5. LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

- 5.1 In November 2020, Wirral Council worked in collaboration with LJMU public health academics to submit an application to the Research England Strategic Policy Fund. The Original submission focused on food poverty and the development of a short-term policy for School Meals in Wirral, to help shape a clear stance moving forward. In December 2020, we were informed that we had been successful in our application and had secured £9,010 to fund the research and policy development. The research has been refocused to explore how the Humanitarian Cell has developed and implemented food responses and food strategies, and how this could be further shaped for the future. A related piece of research is also looking at Free School Meals.
- 5.2 The current research focus is as follows:
 - Focus Groups and Interviews – led by LJMU academics with our input;
 - Engagement with Elected Members and Officers; Humanitarian and Food Sub-group; Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) steering group; Children & YP Partnership;
 - CYP partners and Schools;

- Survey with users of Free School Meals

5.3 This research will be amalgamated into a summary of initial findings in late August, with a full report in September. A further update will be brought to Committee as the research results are produced.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1 Following discussions at the provision of food and activities during the school holidays working group on 19 July 2021, it was agreed that due to the extension of funding the group continue to meet and a report be brought back to Policy & Resources in the new year detailing recommendations going forward.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The funding allocated to the various projects has been outlined above.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The spend outlined is consistent with the terms of each grant.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

8.1 Oversight of the various projects outlined is undertaken by the Temporary Lead for Food & Welfare Support (COVID-19), within the structure of the Humanitarian Cell, reporting to the Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods, Safety & Transport. Administrative support with the grant programmes and wider delivery has been sourced from within the Neighbourhoods team.

9.0 RELEVANT RISKS

9.1 The activity to support Free School Meal eligible children over the holidays, has been funded primarily through Grant as outlined. Whilst the Covid Local Support Grant (formerly the Covid Winter Grant Scheme) has been extended a number of times, at some point (currently 30 September 2021) this additional financial support will cease.

10.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

10.1 The design of the projects reflect learning from previous delivery (including feedback from groups and organisations engaged) and ongoing engagement with those partners engaged in the Humanitarian Cell.

11.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

12.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Deliveries and collections are a part of some of the projects' various operating models. Due to some families self-isolating and the need to minimise contact between households, even within a COVID-safe environment, it has not always been possible for food and activities to be hosted within local community facilities. This would have been the preferred method of delivery throughout in ordinary circumstances. As lockdown restrictions have eased there has been a move back to community-based provision, reducing the need for transportation.
- 12.2 Food is sourced locally where practical and cost-effective to do so.

REPORT AUTHOR: Victoria Simpson
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Officer decision - COVID Local Support Grant - extension No.2 – Published 8/7/21

Section 31 Grant Determination For The Holiday Activities And Food Programme 2021: No 31/5325' guidance from the Department for Education

Wirral and Edsential SLA funding agreement

The Provision of Food & Activities for Children in School Holidays During the Covid 19 Pandemic, Policy & Resources Committee, 11 November 2020.

COVID Winter Grant Scheme – Draft Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities, Department for Work & Pensions.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy & Resources Committee	11 November 2020
Children Young People and Education Committee	1 December 2020
Children, Young People and Education Committee	28 Jan 2021



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT TITLE:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Children, Young People and Education Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

It is envisaged that the work programme will be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Children, Young People and Education Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to note and comment on the proposed Children, Young People and Education Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of workplan formats were explored, with the current framework open to amendment to match the requirements of the Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

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

Terms of Reference

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is responsible for services which help keep children and young people safe and fulfil their potential. It incorporates schools and attainment, and social care for children and families. It has a particular focus on those children who are in care, and for whom the Council has corporate parenting responsibility.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for:

(a) exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council;

(b) the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education;

(c) working with all schools (including academies) in relation to raising standards of attainment and developing opportunities;

(d) leading for the Council and its partners in the discharge the Council's functions as Corporate Parent for its children in care and care leavers;

(e) any other functions comprised in partnership arrangements with other bodies connected with the delivery of services for children, young people and families;

(f) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions;

(g) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:

- child protection;
- children's centres;
- education, schools and settings;
- looked after children;
- mental health services;
- safeguarding;
- special educational needs and disability (SEND);
- youth offending services;
- youth services; and
- social and education transport

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no direct implications to Staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake it's responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

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

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Children, Young People and Education Committee Work Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Constitution
Forward Plan
The Council's Transformation Programme

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22
PROPOSED AGENDA FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION
COMMITTEE – 13 September 2021

Item	Key Decision Yes/No	Lead Departmental Officer
Youth Justice Annual Plan	Yes	Elizabeth Hartley
School Improvement Strategy/ Summary of Standards	Yes	James Backhouse
Edsential Progress Report	No	
Budget Monitoring Report	No	Steve Prytherch
Performance Monitoring Report	No	Carly Brown
Work Programme	No	Victoria Simpson

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED

Item	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Youth Committee	October 21	Hannah Myers
Budget Report	October 21	Shaer Halewood
Budget workshops	TBC	Simone White
Healthy Weight	TBC	Simone White
Child Poverty Strategy	TBC	Simone White
Summary of Standards	September	James Backhouse
SEND Strategy Update	September	Hannah Myers
Learning from Covid and targeting resources with regards to social inequalities	TBC	Simone White

Integrated Front Door workshop	TBC	Simone White
School Budget follow up(to include info re: Traded Services) workshop	TBC	Simone White
School Improvement Strategy Report	September 2021	James Backhouse
Youth Committee	September 2021	Hannah Myers

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Performance and Financial Monitoring Report	Each Meeting	Shaer Halewood/Carly Brown
Childrens Committee Work Programme Update	Each Meeting	Committee Team
Summary of Standards	Twice Annually	James Backhouse
Corporate Parenting Panel Update	Twice Annually	Hannah Myers
Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	Annually	David Robbins
Public Questions	Each Meeting	
Safeguarding Fostering and Adoption	Annually (first meeting of the municipal year)	
Lifelong Learning Annual Performance report	Sept	Paul Smith

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Corporate Parenting Panel	committee	Ongoing	Hannah Myers	
Working Group: Food and Activities during school holidays	Working group	Due to commence Sept 2021	Mark Camborne	
Workshop – Statutory Duties (School Budget)	Workshop	29 March	Simone White	

Task and Finish Reviews				
-	-	--		-
Spotlight Sessions and Workshops				
County Lines Action Update	Workshop	2021/22	Simone White/Tony Kirk	

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