



Children, Young People & Education Committee

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| Date: | Monday, 31 January 2022 |
| Time: | 6.00 p.m. |
| Venue: | Floral Pavillion, Marine Promenade, New Brighton |

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AGENDA

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 - 8)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 23 November 2021

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Public Questions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Wednesday 26th January 2022 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, Wednesday 26th January 2022 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.

6. SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025 (Pages 9 - 42)

7. LOCAL AREA SEND INSPECTION UPDATE (Pages 43 - 62)

8. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2023-24 (Pages 63 - 106)

9. POLLING PLACE REVIEW: SCHOOLS (Pages 107 - 128)

- 10. 2022/23 BUDGET UPDATE (Pages 129 - 228)**
- 11. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 229 - 236)**
- 12. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

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

- 13. POLLING PLACE REVIEW: SCHOOLS - EXEMPT APPENDIX 2 (Pages 237 - 238)**

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

Present: Councillor W Clements (Chair)

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

48 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed Members, Officers and members of the public to the meeting.

49 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Samantha Frost.

50 **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.

No declarations were made.

51 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2021 be agreed.

52 **PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

The Chair informed the Committee that a public question had been received from a member of the public who had asked that their question be read out at the meeting.

The question was in relation the Kingsway Academy PFI contract, seeking information on how much additional funding the Council would commit to

making the Kingsway Academy site fit for purpose for any future use and where the funding would come from.

The Director of Children, Families and Education responded to outline that as part of the feasibility study for the site, an assessment would be made of any alterations that would need to be made to allow the building to be used by anyone that moved onto the site, and the costs of those alterations would be articulated as part of the business case.

53 **EARLY HELP ALLIANCE REPORT TO AWARD**

The Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which sought agreement from the Children, Young People and Education Committee to award and conclude a commission for early help services for children and families, which sought to deliver a variety of supportive experiences which would help Wirral families to thrive.

It was reported to the Committee that the new model would build upon the successes of the Community Matters programme which it would replace, with extensive co-production having taken place with service users and third sector partners to ensure the model was what service users felt was an effective and sustainable early help model. Innovations of the new approach included it being referral free with families making own choices use of self-assessments alongside reductions in waiting lists through the use of online tools.

Clarification was sought on the funding allocation, where it was reported that the initial funding envelope was £0.675m per annum for 5 years but that a further commission had been added into the programme to make it £0.705m.

Resolved – That

- (1) delegated authority be given to the Director of Children’s Services to award the tender to the successful group of bidders following conclusion of the tender process up to a value of £705,000 per annum for 5 years (a total contract value of £3,525,000) with the option to extend for a further 2 periods of 2 years each.**
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Director of Law and Governance to negotiate and conclude the contract for the new service in consultation with the Director of Children’s Services.**

54 **BUDGET WORKSHOP UPDATE**

The Senior Finance Business Partner introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which detailed the feedback and outcomes

on the budget workshops that had been help in recent months to consider and comment on different budget options.

Resolved – That the Budget Workshop feedback and outcomes, as detailed in appendix 1, be reported to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

55 **BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 2 REPORT**

The Senior Finance Business Partner introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which set out the financial monitoring information for the Children, Young People & Education Committee as at quarter 2 (June – Sep) of 2021/22, 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.

It was reported that there was a forecast year-end revenue position of £0.739m favourable and further detail was provided of the position within the individual budgets. This included favourable revenue positions in Children and Families and Early Help and Prevention due to decreased care costs associated with Children Looked After and the use of grant funding in early years. Within the schools budget it was highlighted that there was a forecast adverse variance in the high needs block, mainly due to the increase in demand and complexity of cases alongside an increase in requests for Education, Health and Care Plan assessments.

A request made during consideration of the quarter 1 report was flagged, which was to receive information on the year-to-date actual position against the year-to-date budget to provide further assurance that the outturn forecast was accurate. In response it was highlighted that the format of reporting was derived from Policy and Resources Committee and used for all Policy and Services Committees. It was requested that the issue be raised with Policy and Resources Committee.

Resolved – That

- (1) the forecast year-end revenue position of £0.739m favourable as reported at quarter 2 (Apr – Sept) of 2021/22 be noted.**
- (2) the progress on the achievement of approved savings and the year-end forecast position at quarter 2 (Apr – Sept) of 2021/22 be noted.**
- (3) the reserves allocated to the Committee for future commitments be noted.**

(4) the forecast year-end capital position of as reported at quarter 2 (Apr – Sept) of 2021/2022 be noted.

56 **QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Performance & Improvement Manager introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided 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, with the addition of benchmarking data along with the latest performance information and the further development of Power BI to include interactive reports on Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Education.

Further detail of the performance indicators was provided to the Committee, with demand increasing across social care and early help and prevention and a reduction in the number of children looked after. The timeliness of adoption was raised with the Wirral average taking 912 days against a national target of 426 days where it was outlined that certain scenarios affected the average timescale such as foster carers keeping children for a long time before adopting, and that officers met with OFSTED on a regular basis to monitor this and were happy that it was a suitable explanation.

The schools basket of data was discussed in detail, where it was reported that increase in eligibility of free school meals was due to Department for Education transitional arrangements as part of the roll out of Universal Credit so that any child eligible in March 2018 would continue to be eligible until 2023 regardless of circumstances, but that a further exercise would be undertaken to understand the impact on schools funding when the Universal Credit funding stopped which would be reported to members. Members discussed the SEND indicators and it was reported that five additional staff had been recruited to assist in applications for Educational Health and Care Plans to try and resolve the backlog.

Resolved – That the content of the Performance Report attached in Appendix A be noted.

57 **PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Public Health introduced the report which provided the Committee with the independent annual report of the Director of Public Health. The 2020/2021 Report described enduring health inequalities in Wirral, the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these differences in health outcomes and recommended actions that were needed to improve residents' health. The Director of Public Health outlined that the report had been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board and Adult Social Care

and Public Health Committee and was now being considered by the other Policy and Services Committees as each Committee has a responsibility for functions related to the wider determinants of health.

Members' attention was drawn to the aspects of the annual report relating to children and young people, where the report detailed the important work of the breaking the cycle programme and early help and intervention model, drawing the link between the work of Children's Services and its impact on health and wellbeing. It was acknowledged that the preventative work being undertaken with children and young people would contribute to improved health and wellbeing in the future.

Resolved – That the recommendations detailed within the Public Health Annual Report be endorsed.

58 **KINGSWAY SCHOOL - PFI UPDATE**

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided an overview of the options available to explore the future use of the former Kingsway High School, Wallasey. It was reported that the school was part of the Wirral PFI schools' contract that was signed in 2001 and not 2007 as outlined in the report, which allowed for the significant refurbishment and new build of nine schools across the local authority. Kingsway Academy closed in August 2018 and had remained empty since. Options in relation to the school building use had been explored at the end of 2019, of which one of these was the possibility of Clare Mount School moving to The Kingsway School building. Options outlined had not been developed further due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members noted the urgency to find an alternative use of the site given the cost to maintain it empty and urged officers to explore uses such as for 16-19 provision given the projected rising population in the age group. Whilst it was confirmed that whilst the site had to be used for educational provision, it was possible for part of the site to be used for education with other services delivered from other areas. Further information was sought on whether the Published Admission Number for Clare Mount School would increase if the school were to move to the Kingsway site.

Resolved – That

(1) the different options available for the use of The Kingsway Academy site be noted.

(2) a full feasibility assessment of The Kingsway School site including the possibility of moving Clare Mount school into the site be supported.

59 DOMESTIC ABUSE ANNUAL REPORT

The Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided an update on the progress made by Wirral's Domestic Abuse Alliance in delivering the Domestic Abuse No Excuse strategy and presented the Annual Report, a narrative from the frontline, on the positive impact the strategy was having.

Members were advised on the detail of the early intervention programme which had received funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver a range of services including the domestic abuse programme. The Chair of the Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance detailed the work of the alliance which had involved a significant level of coproduction with survivors to produce the Domestic Abuse Strategy, which had brought about a number of positive changes including support for survivors navigating the child protection order process which they had identified as an issue, and the opening of the lighthouse centre for victims of domestic abuse. Further detail was provided on the 'Drive' programme which involved working with perpetrators of domestic abuse, where it was reported that work was ongoing with 51 perpetrators which it was hoped would have a positive impact on 56 associated victims and 108 associated children.

There was endorsement of the work of the Domestic Abuse Alliance from all members. Further information was sought on the investment into trauma enforcement practices in the workforce, where it was outlined that casework was ongoing to better understand those experiencing trauma and the impact it had on their ability to engage with and access services, the outcomes from which the Committee sought feedback on. It was noted that the three newly appointed Domestic Abuse Family Advocates had experience of domestic abuse through mentorship, volunteering or lived experience which provided an important, non-judgemental support for families.

Resolved – That

(1) the progress made by Wirral's Domestic Abuse Alliance in the first of its 5-year strategy be noted and endorsed.

(2) the Domestic Abuse Annual Report be noted and endorsed.

60 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE

The Performance and Improvement Manager introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided an update on the work of the Corporate Parenting Board for the previous two years of its activity. The role of the Board was outlined to the Committee which included owning and championing the corporate parenting principles and

holding officers and partners to account for how the principles were applied and delivered, alongside understanding the experiences of children looked after and care leavers and building relationships with young people to ensure they can influence priorities and activity of both the council and its partners.

The Board is responsible for providing oversight and monitoring of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-2021 which set out a series of priorities focused on improving the lives for children and young people looked after. It was reported that this had resulted in a number of successes, including swim and gym passes for care leavers, improvements in the timeliness and quality of personal education plans and the development of the care leavers hub.

It was moved by Councillor Chris Carubia, seconded by Councillor Wendy Clements, that a presentation be given to all Councillors on what being a corporate parent means. The motion was put and agreed by assent. It was therefore,

Resolved – That

- (1) the report be noted.**
- (2) a further report be presented back to the Committee within one year on the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.**
- (3) a presentation be given to all Councillors on what being a corporate parent means.**

61 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 31 January 2022

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| REPORT TITLE: | SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025 |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION |

REPORT SUMMARY

The report presents the Children, Young People and Education Committee with the Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025.

The Strategy sets out the local authority's strategy and plans for developing and supporting the social care workforce over the next three years. It outlines five priorities to attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children's lives. These priorities are:

- Priority 1: 'Growing our own' through recruitment and development
- Priority 2: Support Continuous Professional Development to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention
- Priority 3: Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects 'high support high challenge'
- Priority 4: Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families
- Priority 5: Communication and change management

Underpinning these priorities is a commitment to developing a healthy working environment that supports a positive emotional health and wellbeing amongst our workforce and enables Wirral Council to be an employer of choice in children's social care services.

Further detail relating to each priority is outlined in the Strategy document, attached at Appendix A as well as relevant governance and reporting frameworks.

The Strategy will work in conjunction with a range of other key workforce strategies and is aligned to the priority and vision of the Wirral Plan. The success in building a strong and stable workforce will secure "brighter futures" for Wirral children and young people – one of the main priorities outlined in the Wirral Plan.

This decision impacts on all wards.
This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Endorse the Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025 attached at appendix A; and,
2. Agree to receive an update on the progress towards implementation of the Strategy in 12 months.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Strategy will enable the local authority to have a planned, co-produced and considered approach to the recruitment, support and development of its children's social care workforce.
- 1.2 The Strategy will seek to address challenges around recruitment and retention of social care professionals, in addition to supporting a healthy working environment thereby mitigating the risks of increasing absence management rates. Whilst this is both a national and local issue, having a clear and transparent Strategy will enable Wirral local authority to be proactive rather than reactive in supporting the workforce to develop consistent high quality safeguarding services to children, young people and their families.
- 1.3 At the heart of supporting families well and safeguarding the children and young people of Wirral, is the social care workforce. These professionals undertake important statutory responsibilities as well as building trusting relationships with families and young people. Their empowerment and development are fundamental to the delivery of a high-quality service which provides effective support to children and their families.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Do nothing: Wirral's previous Social Care Strategy expired in 2021. Failing to have a clear plan for the recruitment, retention and development of the workforce is a risk for the local authority. Ofsted, as the main regulator of social care services, consider that strategic planning around the workforce is essential in improving skills and ensuring there is enough capacity to support children and families well. In addition, as part of their registration social workers are required by Social Work England to demonstrate their Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Furthermore, revised arrangements being introduced in December 2021 by Social Work England will also place additional requirements on social workers to demonstrate their Continuous Professional Development. It is therefore important that there is a robust training and development offer, articulated around a clear priority and vision for the workforce.
- 2.2 Create one Strategy for the whole of Children's Services workforce: The long-term aspiration for the Directorate is to have one overarching workforce Strategy which acknowledges the diverse functionality of the service whilst finding synergies in how all staff are supported and developed. However, the nuances with the social care workforce and the challenges currently presented, requires the need to prioritise this area.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Nationally, regionally and locally in children's social care there is an increasing shortage of newly qualified and experienced children's social workers. Local authorities across the country are experiencing increasing number of vacancies due to several factors including fewer people choosing social work as a career, and

increased rates of social workers leaving the profession. Additionally, social workers don't necessarily seek the job security of local authority employment, often choosing to move between local authorities or more likely to work in the agency market. Whilst many social workers prefer the security of permanent contracts, there is a shift towards temporary work because of the flexibility to choose when to work, where to work, the ability to move swiftly and higher pay rates.

- 3.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges. A recent study by the Department for Education reported a higher number of social workers to be experiencing work related stress, being over-worked and a fall in job satisfaction. Whilst Wirral has benefitted for several years in having a stable workforce, more recently there is greater evidence of staff turnover and instability. This is impacting upon the workforce in managing staff vacancies, an experience gap in only being able to recruitment predominantly newly qualified social workers, and a greater reliance on agency staffing.
- 3.3 Considering this, since June 2021, colleagues from the Children's Services Performance and Improvement Team have been working in partnership with the social care service to co-produce a new workforce strategy for social care. A series of engagement activities have been undertaken with practitioners including social workers, team managers and senior officers to share and discuss the priorities and listen to the views of the workforce. A working group has also been established to lead on the development of the Strategy and consider the findings of the consultation activity. This group will also act as the key governance group for oversight and monitoring.
- 3.4 The Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2025, attached as Appendix A, sets out how the local authority will attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children's lives. The Strategy will also respond to the challenges facing councils in recruiting and retaining the workforce, by thinking innovatively about how to 'grow our own' experienced practitioners who have the right skill set and expertise. The Strategy will seek to address some of the financial challenges for the local authority as well as by reducing the number of agency workers that will both improve stability for children and young people and reduce costs.
- 3.5 The Strategy identifies five key priorities to drive change and improvement over the next two years:

Priority 1: 'Growing our own' through recruitment and development: – The Strategy articulates a clear philosophy and strategic approach to continue to 'grow our own'. This has proved successful over previous years through our ability to recruit Newly Qualified Social Workers, particularly employing Wirral students once they become qualified, in addition to initiatives such as the Step Up to Social Work and the Frontline programmes. Fortunately we have been able to support Newly Qualified Social Workers through a strong offer via the ASYE programme (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment). The plan is to build on this approach through the Social Worker Apprenticeship Degree, a Step into Social work schools' pilot and a student pilot with universities which will seek to attract those embarking on a career in social care. These new initiatives will be underpinned by a clear progression framework and robust support offer from the Practice Improvement

Team to ensure that newly qualified employees continue to stay and build their career within Wirral.

Priority 2: Support Continuous Professional Development to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention: - The Strategy recognises the diverse offer currently available to staff and seeks to build and enhance support where it is needed most. Mentoring and coaching opportunities and enhancing the skillset of practitioners to support each other will be fundamental in supporting retention, particularly considering current hybrid ways of working. New leadership and management development opportunities will strengthen management at all levels.

Priority 3: Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects 'high support high challenge': Practitioners have identified that they want to be confident that they are performing well and that their systems and tools they use enable them to support children and families in the best possible way. The establishment of a robust performance management framework supported by effective, reflective supervision will provide the foundation for offering both security and support as well as opportunity for critical friend challenge and constructive development and practice.

Priority 4: Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families: - Feedback has identified that some practitioners feel that systems and processes could be streamlined and more efficient to allow for more effective practice. A review of the practice model Supporting Families, Enhancing Futures will help to identify opportunities for further improvements in current practice and process. The 'Build Back Better' funding to support a diagnostic around a 'systemic practice model' will provide further exploration of new practice models which builds on what currently works well in Wirral.

Priority 5: Communication and change management – One of the most important areas for development based on feedback from practitioners related to the need for improved communication between senior operational officers and frontline workers. This was particularly pertinent where plans or proposals were being developed and communicated across the service. Approaches to change management were considered not effective in enabling workers to feel part of the change and involved and consulted.

Moving forward, the Strategy sets out a priority to improve communication, particularly through change management processes. Utilising the skills and guidance from the council's organisational development and Human Resources teams, senior officers in social care will be supported with effective tools and training to improve change management approaches, ensuring that service design principles and key service developments are co-produced.

Underpinning theme: Wellbeing - Insight from surveys and consultations with practitioners has identified that staff wellbeing is a contributing factor to employee retention and high-quality practice. High workload, homeworking because of the pandemic and the pressures of meeting the statutory demands of the role has increased levels of sickness and social workers leaving the authority. This has

subsequently increased pressures on existing employees, further exacerbating stress and poor emotional wellbeing.

To address this, the Strategy seeks to build on the celebration and wellbeing events that have proved successful. The move towards face-to-face events will be a focus for the next two years as well as ways to improve motivation e.g. speakers/TED talks. Whilst the current employee relations offer will continue to be promoted, a feasibility study will be carried out to explore a bespoke wellbeing offer for social workers, shaped around their needs and acknowledging the nature of the work undertaken. A holistic co-produced wellbeing plan will underpin the Strategy – regular review and analysis with the workforce through health checks/Social Work Organisational Resilience Diagnostic (SWORD) survey will ensure this is flexible to meet the needs of employees.

- 3.6 Further development areas relating to the priorities above are detailed in the Strategy document attached at appendix A. Once approved, a planned programme of work will be outlined with SMART actions, timescales, responsible officers and intended outcomes. A set of key performance indicators aligned to each priority will enable robust monitoring. This will also be supported by regular ‘pulse’ surveys to assess the impact of the Strategy on the wellbeing and views of the workforce.
- 3.7 The Social Care Workforce Strategy Working Group will be the lead governance group for monitoring the progress and impact of the Strategy. This group will report progress to Children’s Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis, highlighting achievements and risks where this is necessary and appropriate.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is no significant additional investment required currently to deliver the workforce strategy. A cost-benefit-analysis will need to be undertaken for each initiative to explore financial implications and balance this against impact. Ultimately this may mean that some programmes do not come to fruition.
- 4.2 A focus of the strategy will be on securing permanent employees into vacant posts to reduce the reliance on agency workers. In this regard, the importance of the strategy implementation is significant in supporting the local authority to achieve a balanced budget. Any investment, therefore, should be considered in the context of any potential deliverable savings.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The local authority has a legal duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in Wirral. The Council service is highly regulated and performs several statutory functions. It is obliged to meet statutory timescales and risks intervention and scrutiny from Ofsted (regulator) and the Department for Education if these are not met. The development of a stable, skilled and supported workforce is fundamental to the ability of the local authority in adhering to its legal obligations.
- 5.2 The local authority also has a legal duty to support the health and safety of staff and this includes emotional wellbeing and support.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The key teams which will have responsibility for implementation of the Strategy include:

- Children's Performance and Improvement Team
- Social Care Practice Improvement Team
- Human Resources
- Organisational Development

6.2 In addition, colleagues from across the Council and Children's Services may also be called upon to assist with specific projects or initiatives. This could include support from Legal Services, Information Technology and Finance providing advice and guidance and assisting in the effective implementation of planned approaches and initiatives.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The previous strategy was not providing direction to inform planning and activity. Initiatives were reactionary and ad hoc, resulting in duplication and little impact. It is important that the local authority provides clear strategic direction for the prioritisation of resource and activity. This strategy seeks to lead the development of a planned, meaningful and achievable programme of activity that can be monitored, reviewed and assessed to understand its impact and effectiveness.

7.2 The workforce challenges outlined are not unique to Wirral. Local authorities across the country struggle to recruit and retain social work professionals. Whilst this strategy seeks to address the pertinent local issues, the national challenges associated with market shortages may continue to be apparent for its duration.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The strategy has been co-produced with social care practitioners from different fields and specialisms. Engagement and consultation activity has involved:

- SWORD survey with all staff
- focus groups with frontline practitioners
- 1-2-1 discussions with frontline practitioners
- review and discussion at practitioner forums and team manager forums
- review and discussion at team manager conference
- review and discussion at social care workforce working group consisting of Heads of Service and Assistant Director for Children and Families

8.2 The feedback from the engagement activity has resulted in the shaping and development of the priorities outlined in the strategy. Their voice will continue to shape and develop the work programme moving forward. Regular 'check back' sessions will form part of the analysis and evaluation of the impact and outcomes of the strategy.

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 attached here.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no significant environment and climate change implications arising from the report. The strategy articulates plans to develop a robust hybrid model of working which will continue to support reductions in Carbon dioxide emissions.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The strategy outlines a strategic approach to 'growing our own' as being a fundamental concept to drive planning moving forward. Initiatives outlined include working with local schools and universities to encourage young adults from Wirral to consider a career in social work. These training and development opportunities can translate into rewarding career opportunities, thus creating new employment for residents on Wirral.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Hannah Myers**
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APPENDICES

Appendix A Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Social Care Workforce Strategy 2019-2021
SWORD survey

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|--|----------|
| Performance Update – Social Work Workforce Children, Young People and Education Committee | 27.10.21 |

WELLBEING

RECRUITMENT

DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025

DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT

GROW OUR OWN

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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FOREWORD

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



At the heart of every organisation are the people who work in it. Building success, creating services that are high quality and delivering improvements means supporting and developing people. In Children’s Social Care, this includes frontline practitioners, managers and senior leaders who are all pivotal in shaping support and providing the right help for children and families when they need it.

I am delighted to introduce the Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025 which sets out how we will work over the next three years to attract the skilled workforce we need, to support their development in ways which match our strategic priorities, and to ensure that their managers and leaders are as skilled as possible.



Simone White, Director for Children, Families and Education

In Wirral, we want to improve the lives of children, young people and families to keep them safe, and to fulfil their potential. This can only be achieved through a confident, competent and highly skilled children and young people’s workforce that understands its responsibilities and works in partnership with others to deliver relevant, responsive and high-quality services.

It is essential that we, as the council, put the right support, development and infrastructure in place to enable all our social care practitioners to deliver high quality services to help vulnerable children and families to achieve their full potential. We want our social workers to be proud of what they do and the quality of work they deliver - this is our most powerful tool to recruit and attract others.

The Strategy sets out a clear ambition: to attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children’s lives. This will be underpinned by a respectful organisation that values the role of social workers in supporting vulnerable children and families. It is characterised by an environment that provides “high support and high challenge” to social workers to be reflective, analytical and professionally curious in their practice. We must celebrate and recognise good practice and support others to do the same building and creating a strengths-based model that is recognised across the country and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

The Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2025 sets out how the local authority will attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children’s lives. It will set out our direction of travel for building a strong and stable workforce and outline the best route to get there and about how we will embed good practice and strong ethos of the right values, behaviours and culture as part of our work each day.

The Strategy will also respond to the challenges facing councils in recruiting and retaining the workforce, by thinking innovatively about how to ‘grow our own’ experienced practitioners who have the right skill set and expertise.

The Strategy will seek to address some of the financial challenges for the local authority as well by reducing the number of agency workers that will both improve stability for children and young people and reduce costs.

The Strategy identifies five key priorities to drive change and improvement over the next two years:

- **Priority 1:** ‘Growing our own’ through recruitment and development
- **Priority 2:** Support Continuous Professional Development to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention
- **Priority 3:** Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects ‘high support high challenge’
- **Priority 4:** Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families
- **Priority 5:** Communication and change management

Good health and wellbeing are critical in supporting a successful workforce strategy and this will be the underpinning priority across all the work carried out.

A planned programme of work will be outlined with SMART actions, timescales, responsible officers and intended outcomes. A set of key performance indicators aligned to each priority will enable robust monitoring. This will also be supported by regular ‘pulse’ surveys to assess the impact of the Strategy on the wellbeing and views of the workforce.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

Nationally, regionally and locally in children's social care there is an increasing shortage of newly qualified and experienced children's social workers. Government reporting on the Children's Social Care Workforce in 2020 showed that there were 6,100 FTE children and family social worker vacancies on 30 September 2020, up from 6,000 at the same point in 2019. Many local authorities across the country are seeing increasing number of vacancies due to several factors including fewer people choosing social work as a career, and increased rates of social workers leaving the profession.

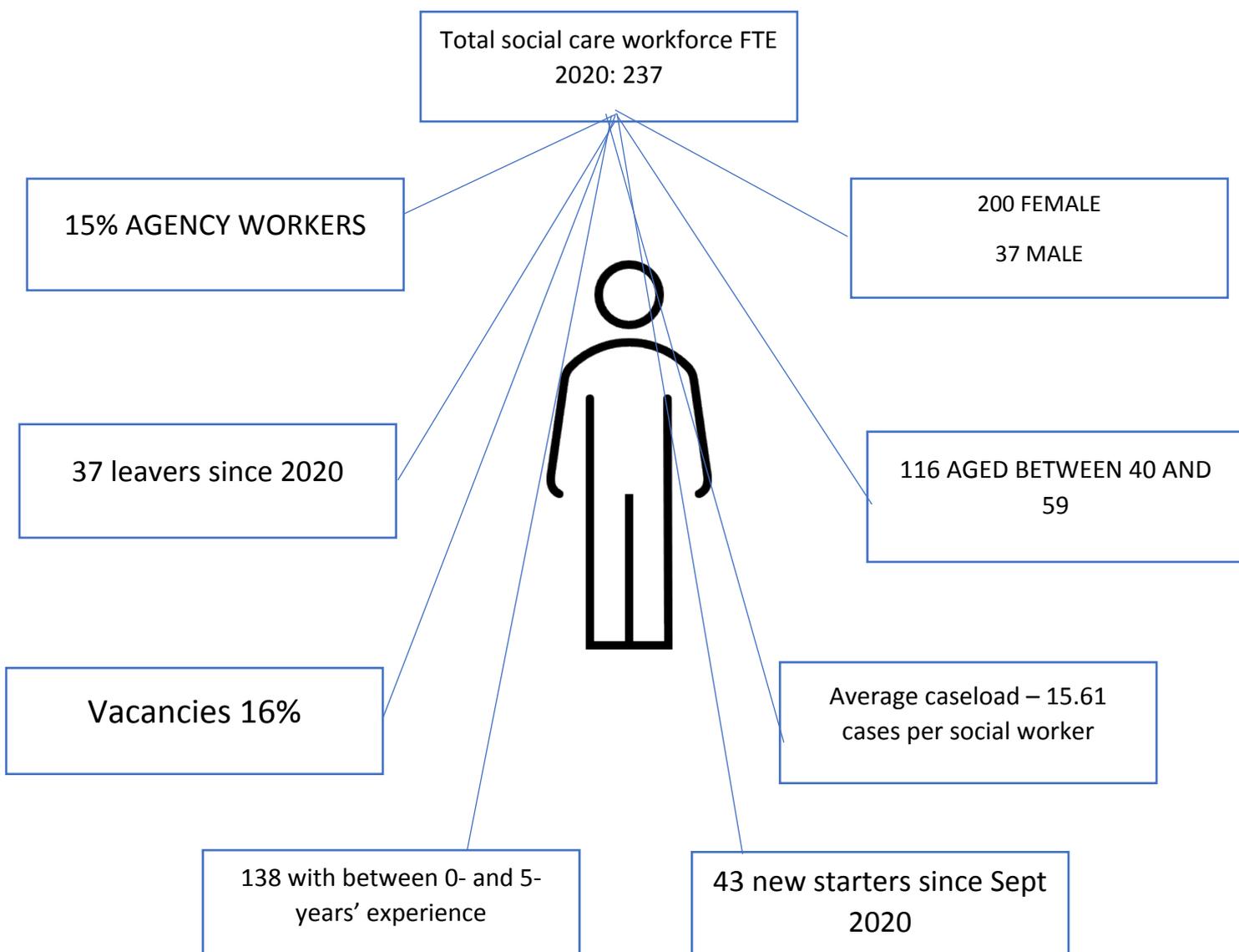
Additionally, social workers don't necessarily seek the job security of local authority employment, often choosing to move between local authorities or more likely to work in the agency market.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges. A recent study by the Department for Education reported a higher number of social workers to be experiencing work related stress, being over-worked and a fall in job satisfaction.

Whilst Wirral has benefitted for several years in having a stable workforce, more recently there is greater evidence of staff turnover and instability. This is impacting upon the workforce in managing staff vacancies, an experience gap in only being able to recruitment predominantly newly qualified social workers, and a greater reliance on agency staffing.

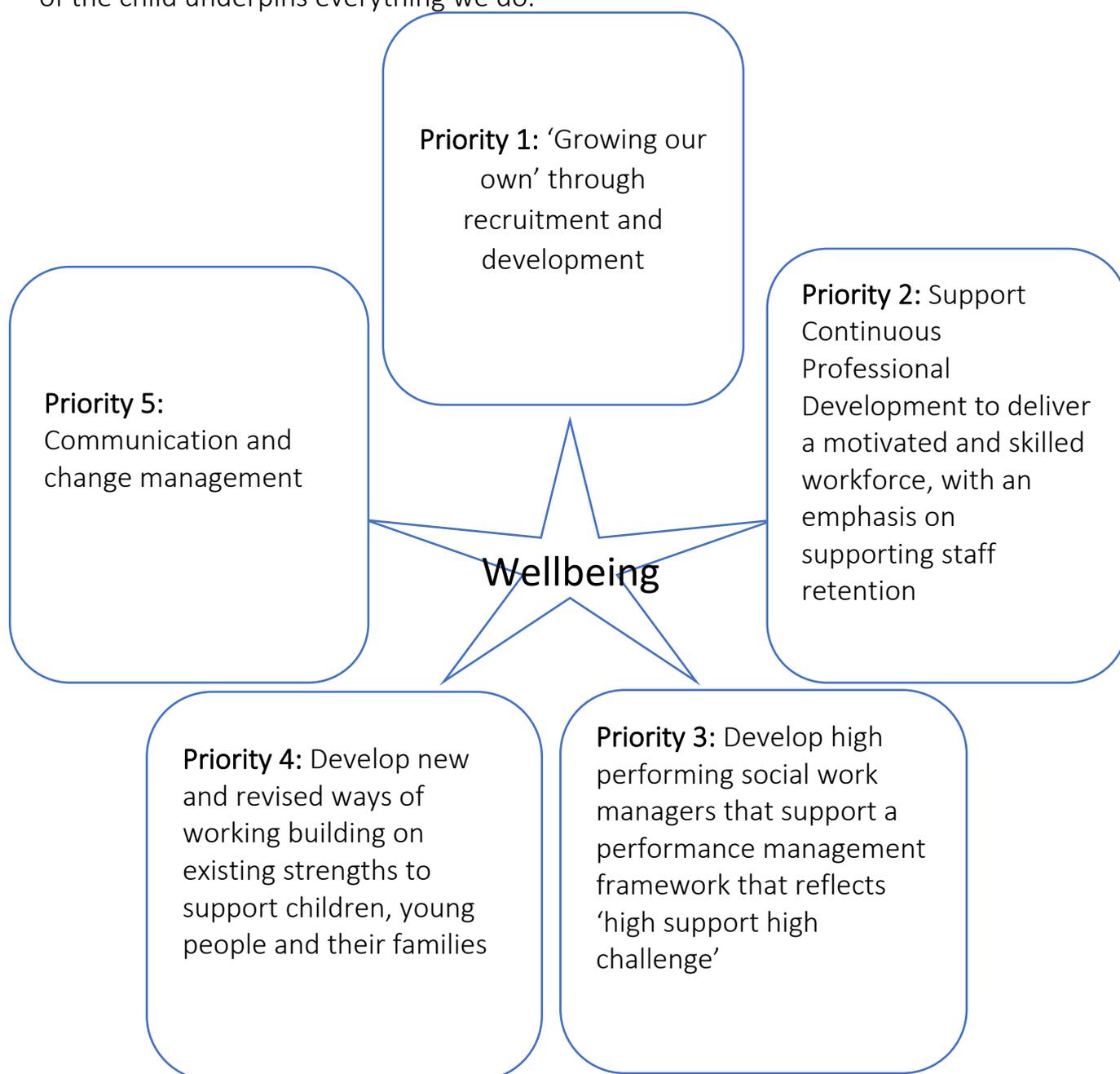
WIRRAL WORKFORCE SNAPSHOT

As of September 21 – workforce census



OUR PRIORITIES

As a council and children's services, five key priorities have been identified that are the workforce strategy. These priorities describe the environment required for an effective workforce that will deliver our vision and ensures that the voice of the child underpins everything we do.



Each priority will have its own action plan setting out the activities and timescales for delivering them together with how we will measure progress. The action plan will be reviewed regularly.

PRIORITY 1: 'GROWING OUR OWN' THROUGH RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Having a robust, timely and impactful recruitment programme is fundamental to ensuring that the workforce does not become overwhelmed and fatigued. The previous Workforce Strategy 2019 outlined a focus on growing our own practitioners through various recruitment initiatives.

The Step Up to Social Work programme has proved successful each year with positive conversion rates from students to the ASYE programme. Many of the students from the original cohorts in January 2020 continue to work in social care professions in Wirral.

The continued positive relationship with the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership has offered new and ideas and concepts to support the grow our own approach.

These have been complemented by recruitment campaigns, events and incentives to advertise the offer and benefits of working for Wirral Council.

To build on this, our Workforce Strategy for 2022 will articulate plans to continue to 'grow our own' and expand our current offer and campaigns. The Strategy will outline how it will attract and recruit the best candidates, creating an environment for them to flourish and provide the opportunity for them to develop their careers and become our experienced social workers and team managers of the future.

Successful recruitment initiatives

- ✓ Holding events with universities which present us with the opportunities to talk to students
- ✓ Successful fast track social work programmes including Step up to Social Work Programme and Front-Line Programme
- ✓ Targeted external recruitment campaigns with Jobs Go Public #Bring it On Campaign, #Be the Difference
- ✓ Assessment Centres and Recruitment Days
- ✓ Targeted Agency to Permanent
- ✓ Contribution of £50 towards HCPC registration
- ✓ ASYE offer and support: The Service has focussed on recruiting newly qualified ASYEs
- ✓ Step Up to Social Work programme – This has run for the past 13 years and has seen six successful cohorts go through the programme with a seventh beginning, consisting of 33 students.
- ✓ Frontline – Another successful scheme which is currently underway on its third cohort, consisting of 4 students.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Growing our own

We will continue to be part of the Step Up to Social Work Programme and offer placements for students on the BA and MA programmes. Our Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) offer for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW's) is already strong and we have further developed our pay and rewards in this area.

To build on the previous successes of these programmes, we will also:

- ❖ explore the option of creating a **second 'Frontline' Team**: Wirral is currently part of the Frontline programme and has successfully recruited a full social work team. Due to the success of this programme, Wirral would be looking to expand the current programme further to incorporate a second Frontline Team.
- ❖ Implement and evaluate the **Social Work Apprenticeship Degree programme** –A social work apprenticeship degree programme was introduced in 2021 and seeks to provide opportunities for 'Family Workers' to develop their skills and careers in social care whilst being financially supported. We will continue to support the programme (with 4 employees) over the next three years with education and work-based placements to achieve the social work degree. This offer seeks to build on the skills and knowledge of workers who already have direct involvement with families and understand
- ❖ We hope to embark on a new and exciting **Step into Social Work Schools Project** which will see an offer being given to sixth form students who are making their university and career decisions. This programme will provide an opportunity for 50 year 12 students to find out more about careers in social work and social care from professionals who know. Students will also be given support on the application and interview process.
- ❖ We will also build on our current offer to **university students** through our involvement in the Grow Your Own pilot with the CMSWTP. This pilot will provide an opportunity for a small number of students to undertake both social work placements within Wirral. In supporting and developing these students over the duration of their Social Work Degree, we hope that

they will want to continue their professional journey with us and secure a permanent position.

Theme 2: Branding and marketing

Wirral has a lot to offer as a place to work and live. We want to showcase the benefits of working in social care and the many employee benefits, utilising a range of different forums and media to deliver a positive and fit for purpose branding that will resonate with those embarking on a career in social care, as well as existing social care professionals. To do this, we will:

- ❖ Develop and deliver a planned programme of **recruitment campaigns** using the current Jobs Go Public website but also exploring new ways of promoting roles in Wirral. We will explore how to use events and advertising to have the most impact as well as interesting ‘practice-focussed’ web articles and social media to promote innovative practice. Virtual and face-to-face recruitment events will be held throughout each year, both targeted and universal.
- ❖ **Re-brand and renew the current advertising and marketing plans** and strategies, continuing to build and enhance on the current #bethedifference branding. A refreshed job description and regular cycle of reviewing adverts will continue to ensure that marketing is timely and impactful. Measuring the impact of these campaigns and strategies will help shape future programmes/plans.
- ❖ **Design and develop a ‘package on a page’** will provide a visual and user-friendly guide to promote the benefits of working in Wirral. This will be used as part of the branding and promotional campaigns but also will be shared with professionals and partners to help promote the offer available to colleagues and friends.
- ❖ **Develop a Social Work Academy website** which contains detailed information about working for Wirral. This will allow anyone considering applying for a role in Wirral to understand the progression framework and what to expect at each stage in their career. The Practice Improvement Team offer and support as well as wider packages of support e.g. wellbeing/emotional support will all be included here and easily accessible to anyone wanting to ‘find out more’.
- ❖ **Strengthen and further investment in our ASYE programme** recognising that most of the social worker recruitment will be newly qualified. This

will mean a higher proportion of our workforce will be newly qualified social workers who will be supported through their ASYE programme.

Theme 3: Incentives

We want to look at what else attracts and interests people to work and live in Wirral. We know that our committed employees are also our biggest assets, and we want to use them to help promote and support our recruitment campaigns. Incentives can sometimes help motivate and drive people to think differently or make different decisions. Over the next few years we will:

- ❖ Review the **'refer a friend' scheme** and engage with staff to redevelop a more impactful approach. Currently we offer a financial incentive of up to £500 for Wirral employees to have a 'friend' join us. This hasn't yet taken off and so we would like to look at ways in which we can increase the amount and making this offer more attractive.
- ❖ Utilise the Council's **regeneration plans and developments** to promote and showcase new areas of Wirral to live and work. The residential developments at Wirral Waters and in other areas of Birkenhead provide an opportunity to market Wirral as a place to live and use this as part of the marketing campaigns. Further exploration with Council colleagues about any potential offers or incentives as part of a holistic relocation package will also be explored over the next three years.
- ❖ Look at **other incentives** to support professionals to Wirral, seeking to break down physical and financial barriers. For example, local research has found that the tunnel fees from Liverpool to Wirral have been a disincentive for some workers from further afield. A cost-benefit analysis to understand the impact and benefits of incentives to break down barriers is needed to support this priority.

Theme 4: Induction

We know from research and discussions with practitioners, that a positive start to a new role (in any position) is important and allows them to feel welcome and settle in well. The Council's induction programme supports new employees to have a range of information for starting their new role, but it is not tailored to the specific needs of social work professionals. We will:

- ❖ **develop a bespoke induction process** which brings together the offer of the Practice Improvement Team along with other important information about embarking on a career in social care in Wirral.
- ❖ **review the current buddy system** and implement a new buddy system for all new starters not just newly qualified so that there is a ‘helping hand’ for new recruits. This will be particularly important for those who start virtually.
- ❖ **Explore different ways of securing IT equipment** for new starters so that they don’t join without the right equipment in place.

PRIORITY 2: SUPPORT CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO DELIVER A MOTIVATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SUPPORTING STAFF RETENTION

A strong and stable workforce is key to delivering high quality, effective and consistent practice to our children and families. We need to be clear on our offer so to attract high quality experienced practitioners that want to remain with us. We will promote a culture of continuous professional learning, where

Successful development initiatives

- An ASYE Programme
- An ASYE Co-ordinator
- Progression Framework
- Professional Development opportunities
- Buddy system for NQSW's
- Designated practice improvement team to support the service
- Centralised location and improved technology through Surface pros
- Agile working
- Revised grading structure for Team Managers and IROs
- More robust and effective progression framework – 'fast tracking' through grades
- Training and Development Programme: Core Skills for Managers, DfE Practice Leadership Programme
- Introduction of staff recognition programme (mug of recognition, staff engagement events, Be the Difference awards, etc)

practitioners have access to a range of opportunities that support their development.

Our practitioners will have access to development opportunities that supports their continuous learning and careers. We shall ensure that our practitioners are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning and development ensuring that practice remains excellent and meets the needs of our children

and families.

We want to create an environment where excellent social work can flourish. Our culture will promote healthy challenge and feedback where practitioners feel confident to question and offer solutions. We will listen and respond to feedback from our children and families, from colleagues and partners and we shall drive improvements that deliver the best outcomes for children and families and the practice of our workforce.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Training and development

We will continue to work hard to attract experienced social workers to Wirral and the work we have completed around reducing caseloads, career progression opportunities and pay and rewards are key areas in supporting this.

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) – CPD will enable learning to become conscious and proactive, rather than passive and reactive. It is the holistic commitment of professionals towards the enhancement of personal skills and proficiency throughout their careers.

Theme 2: Mentoring and coaching

We want to be a progressive council which takes a strengths-based approach to employee development and wellbeing. Using fellow employees, we want to develop a robust mentoring and coaching offer for social work employees.

- ❖ Develop a **database** of mentors and coaches from across the council and those specific to social care.
- ❖ Outline a clear and planned **programme of mentoring and coaching** using a range of insight methods to target where this would be useful:
including:
 - feedback from managers
 - Insight from audit
 - self-referral/request for support
 - appraisal/check-in information

Theme 3: Audit as a learning tool

We have made significant progress in our approach to audit and in using this as an effective tool to identify good practice and learning. Previously it was regarded as a criticism rather than something constructive and helpful. We need to build on using audit to inform individual training and development needs, using it in supervision and check-ins to explore how audit can shape and direct CPD. We will:

- ❖ **Take a strengths-based approach to audit to ensure that it celebrates and identifies good quality practice and is shared with social workers so they have a good understanding of what good practice looks like and can talk about it.**
- ❖ **Ensure that the views of families, partners are incorporated into audit so that their feedback and learning can be shared and helped to identify learning**
- ❖ **Ensure that audit is captured in supervision and used to inform training and development needs and plans.**

Theme 4: Prep for progression

Our progression framework outlines the steps that social workers need to take to develop in their career. Sometimes, workers feel nervous or worried about what the next step might entail in practical terms or struggle with interview technique and preparation. We want to ensure that workers are supported to progress, building on the robust progression framework support. We will:

- ❖ **Ensure that the progression framework is clearly understood and accessible utilising the development of the Social Work Academy as the ‘one stop shop’ of progression information, hints and tips.**
- ❖ **Offer shadowing opportunities for those considering applying to progress to ensure that they feel confident and capable of taking the next step and have direct insight into the practicalities of the roles**
- ❖ **Support employees with interview training and preparation so that they are successful at interview, particularly into more management/senior roles.**

PRIORITY 3: DEVELOP HIGH PERFORMING SOCIAL WORK MANAGERS THAT SUPPORT A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK THAT REFLECTS 'HIGH SUPPORT HIGH CHALLENGE'

We recognise that our managers and leaders play a pivotal role in setting the standards and behaviours that empower our practitioners to deliver the very best practice. We will ensure that all our managers and leaders and aspiring managers are developed, creating opportunities for them to achieve their full potential.

We want to undertake a skills analysis with our managers and aspiring managers, providing us with the data to inform a development programme that not only develops their confidence and practice but the confidence and practice of others. We shall offer a range of development opportunities including coaching, mentoring, 360-degree feedback and shadowing.

In recent months we have implemented a revised performance management framework intended to provide clarity and security for employees and to support consistent practice. This approach has supported a more coherent and measured way of providing constructive challenge and to identify areas for improvement and development.

We want to build on this with a new supervision policy to ensure managers are clear on how to use reflective supervision to address performance and support improved practice. We need to make sure that actions are SMART and acted upon from supervisions and their impact considered and understood.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Manager skills audit

We need to understand the skill mix and strengths of our social worker managers to build on strengths and improve on development areas. A robust needs analysis of workers (through skills audit and health checks) will help to shape the training and development offer for managers. We will:

- ❖ undertake a skills audit of social work managers to identify strengths and to shape a manager training and development programme that is fit for purpose.
- ❖ Work with managers to identify development gaps and skills strengths across the management workforce and explore ways to harness these skills proactively.

Theme 2: Manager training and development

- ❖ Develop a competency framework and are exploring change management within the framework before rolling out across the organisation.
- ❖ Developing manager training for all managers and again which will include change management within this offer.
- ❖ Undertake 360 review. This involves obtaining 360-degree feedback & a self-assessment against elements of the competency framework. There are 7 behaviours within the framework including Change Orientation. Subsequent discussions with OD will help individuals to reflect on their individual leadership styles and behaviours. The OD team will review how to roll this out to other levels of management in due course.

Theme 3: Performance management and quality assurance framework

We will

- ❖ further embed the performance management framework so that there is a golden thread of reporting and management from DCS to frontline practitioner
- ❖ Use the performance framework to allow for constructive challenge and to feed into the training and development programme
- ❖ Ensure that managers understand what techniques and tools they can use to address performance that is constructive and strengths-based to support positive improvements.

Theme 4: High support, high challenge culture

We will:

- ❖ Empower managers to understand their roles and responsibilities in addressing improvements in practice
- ❖ Work with HR colleagues to embed a stronger and more asset-based approach to performance management, utilising the tools, pathways and processes available
- ❖ Ensure that training and support is provided to both managers and practitioners in order to implement a positive improvement culture.

PRIORITY 4: DEVELOP NEW AND REVISED WAYS OF WORKING BUILDING ON EXISTING STRENGTHS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Working through the Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for us all, but it has provided us with an opportunity to look at the way we work and how we can adjust to our surroundings. Embracing more remote and hybrid working will mean changing working cultures, systems and behaviours

By working differently, it will enable us to be closer to our communities and work with them to ensure that our services are accessible and designed and delivered to meet the needs of families in the best way possible.

As an organisation, Wirral is looking towards the workforce adopting a ‘hybrid’ working model which incorporates staff working from home, working virtually, and having the option to utilise office space to work or conduct meetings from, if required.

Evidence (from audits and evaluation) tell us that relationship-based practice is working well in Wirral. Social workers are building strong and constructive relationships with families and children and young people, and this is translating into meaningful support and outcomes.

The current practice model works well in some areas, particularly in early help, where the golden thread of the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures is evident in the recording and feedback from families. Independent evaluation and audit have reflected that the practice model needs to be further embedded within the culture and delivery of practice across the social care workforce. We want to build upon some of the good practice that exists as part of the SFEF model and take it that stage further to help support our “practice identity” that is fundamental in how we work alongside children and families to achieve meaning and sustainable outcomes.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

We need to build a model which support employees both in the short term and long-term. It is widely recognised that hybrid working is the reality and future

Benefits of a hybrid model

1. **Flexibility and promotion of a better work-life balance:** Service permitting, the hybrid model supports staff to accommodate a working pattern that recognises the conflicting demands of life (such as childcare, caring responsibility, and an individual's own health and wellbeing) and supports the prioritisation of these needs alongside the duty of work.
2. **Environment & Commute** With the understanding that staff can work at a location they feel best suits the priorities for that day, less commuting is required. Not only does this serve well towards our carbon footprint but it also means at the close of business employees are able to immediately switch from 'work' to 'life' mode without traffic, car parking or travel. The organisation can cost save on the running of multiple buildings and offer proportionate collaboration and office space to suit the requirements of the workforce.
3. **Increased productivity** Employees will be able to work from a location that best supports their focus and productivity whether that be from the comfort of home or within the structure of an office. Meetings can be held face to face in an office environment or virtually. Collaboration style will be flexible to support the best use of time and resource and will promote the ability to connect on smaller or larger scales and with colleagues near or far.
4. **Better mental health** Most importantly the mental health of employees is supported within the hybrid model to allow consideration for individual's needs, challenges or pressures and agree an environment that best supports these. The model encourages a more positive balance of work and life as well as maximising the opportunity to achieve successful outcomes within work.

for many local authorities across the country and in Wirral it is important that we embrace the learning and adapt to a new hybrid model.

A new hybrid model for the Council must reflect and support the social work profession and enable social workers to feel supported in their role. Working in partnership with colleagues from a range of fields across the council will ensure that the new model can do this.

Our ways of working needs to be interlinked and connected with our practice model and our structure – all of these must come together to direct our future practice and system.

Theme 1: Effective hybrid working (which meets practitioner needs)

We want to work effectively in partnership to support the development of a corporate hybrid working model which supports social workers and practitioners to effectively meet in work in a safe and relaxed environment in which they can share and discuss cases.

We will:

- ❖ Work with corporate colleagues to explore a new hybrid model which meets social care practitioner needs

- ❖ Implement a 'children's services' bespoke model which utilises assets such as Rock Ferry building to ensure that workers can have access to a place-based support infrastructure.

Theme 2: Relationship-based Practice Model

We will:

- ❖ Review and refresh the current practice model and training for SFEF to ensure that there is wider use and use this to inform evaluation
- ❖ Provide feedback on evaluation of current model and areas of strengths and development
- ❖ Supported by the Department for Education and the Children's Innovation Unit complete an options appraisal of accredited practice models that will complement our social work approach to supporting children and families.
- ❖ Complete systemic practice diagnostic in partnership with other local authorities to explore how it might help build on current strengths e.g. relationship-base practice whilst also providing the necessary tools and support for high quality practice.

Theme 3: Integrated ways of working

We will:

- ❖ Explore new locality-based models of practice which connects and integrated a more aligned early help offer to reduce escalation of need at level 4
- ❖ Explore further opportunity to bring in new services into an integrated framework of support
- ❖ Use new ways of working and integrated models as a 'hook' for social workers who are keen to explore this practice and development
- ❖ Build on learning from pilot programmes including social workers in school programme, Cradle to Career and we can talk about domestic abuse to develop new models of working and delivery.
- ❖ Outline a clear phased approach to place-based working which considers both the long- and medium-term plans.

PRIORITY 5: COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Strong, clear communication and engagement supports a culture of openness and transparency: where employees feel empowered, valued and listened to. We already utilise a range of internal communication methods to ensure key messages and information is passed to employees. This includes staff engagement sessions, monthly Director's updates which provide staff with information and good news stories on service developments and achievements. We also make very good use of our Teams channels to send out important announcements and general information.

During the recent SWORD survey this year, 'change' was identified as one of the main points that provided a great deal of negative response. With many practitioners feeling that change wasn't well managed, and information wasn't always readily accessible to them.

We want to provide clear communication which supports consistent delivery of coherent services, which continuously improves outcomes. We also want our staff to feel involved and confident that they are receiving the right information in the best format.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Change management

Feedback from practitioners

"Sometimes it really feels like information overload, and this can make it hard to keep up with the latest information because it comes in so many formats (email, newsletter, teams etc)"

"Information can be hard to locate because things get so lost in the number of emails received"

"General consensus was that methods of contact that work best are through MS Teams"

"Sometimes messages can feel very corporate."

"Feel that senior managers coming into team meetings and taking on any issues concerns would be better than just conducting a staff survey. Senior Managers can otherwise be out of touch with what happens on the front line."

"Mug of recognition – should go out to families and children and partners too. This incentive seems to be stuck with the same teams."

"Timings of communications make it difficult to read them as they come in – sent too late in the day."

Improve senior manager understanding of change management (provide them with training)

- Create new change management policy of engaging workforce in social care team changes
- The Practice Improvement Team are also offering to work with managers who are looking to implement change to ensure change is well managed and communicated.

Theme 2: Policy and process

- Work with the professional practice officer to ensure all updated documents and procedures are accessible to teams.
- Review and refine staff transfer process.

Theme 3: Communication

- Continue with staff engagement events and look at how we can continue to improve on these.
- We aim to create a MS Teams channel which will be used purely for promoting progression and development opportunities and it will be available for all, across the directorate.

UNDERPINNING THEME: WELLBEING

Workforce wellbeing is not only about supporting employees to be fit, healthy, and motivated but it is also recognising that doing so is key to the success of any organisation. Failure to protect the physical and emotional health of employees at work may mean:

- placing an organisation at risk
- affecting employees' ability to do their job
- affecting an organisation's productivity and effectiveness

During the past 2 years we have had to face many new and unprecedented challenges with the Covid-19 pandemic and so although already firmly on our radar the wellbeing of our people has never been more important.

We have had to take a deeper and more focused look at how we might work differently and how we can strengthen what we do to meet the future needs of our communities. Although a challenging time it is important to recognise that this can create many opportunities for us here at Wirral.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Recognition and rewards

- Implement DCS 'letters' to staff
- Sparkling Moments
- Exploring other reward options such as long serving awards and incentivised
- The team are also putting in place plans to undertake Serious Success Reviews and Sparkling Moments (one of the suggestions from within the SWORD workbook).

SWORD SURVEY – May 21

Back in May this year we asked colleagues to complete the Research in Practice (RIP) SWORD survey and as part of this wellbeing was covered amongst most questions. Since then, we have spent several months reviewing the results that RIP provided us with and working to address the feedback received.

Overall the results of the SWORD survey were positive: over 70% of staff feeling satisfied, and we also received an excellent response from the separate COVID questionnaire, where the positive response rate was between 70.48%-97.14% for all questions asked.

However, these figures show there is still room for improvement. As such, the team working on the SWORD survey have been working to address those areas where more than 40% of responses were negative and identified the following themes: the demands of the job and the opportunity to debrief/ reflect; all of which are being greatly impacting practitioners' wellbeing.

Theme 2: Bespoke emotional and mental health support

- Roll out an online learning package to build emotional resilience within teams. 36 representatives have been given a place on this course, with specific individuals within this number identified who will roll out the training to the wider service at a later stage.
- Commission emotional health and wellbeing and stress management support specifically for social workers
- Speaking to practitioners and managers about accessing services that currently exist such as Occupational Health (OH) and following the correct procedure

Theme 3: Motivation and staff morale

- The modernisation & support team are now working to update the Wellbeing Manifesto to develop a series of new offers, including a calendar of monthly activities and access to a range of health and wellbeing documents
- TED Talks
- Motivational speakers
- Wellbeing sessions
- Socials

Theme 4: Time for reflection

- Since the survey, the Practice Improvement Team has undertaken work with all teams introducing reflective tools. Following consultation with the practitioner forum the Practice Improvement Team are planning to trail taking reflective spaces to teams rather than working on a referral in basis.

EVALUATION AND MEASURING IMPACT

We will measure successful delivery of the Workforce Strategy using existing data and will continue to measure the “condition” of the organisation through other relevant data, but this will need to be expanded to include new outcome-based measures identified as we develop the strategy. This stage also includes measuring effectiveness, determining success and reporting on key performance indicators.

We will measure the impact of the Strategy through the following subjective approaches:

- Social care health check
- Social care census
- SWORD survey
- Focus groups/engagement sessions – practitioner forums

We have also outlined the following key performance indicators to measure the impact of the Strategy:

- No' of ASYEs successful completion of ASYE
- % Reduction in sickness absence
- % Reduction in sickness due to work related stress
- % of social worker returning to office
- % workers reporting improved mental health and wellbeing

GOVERNANCE

The Social Care Workforce Strategy Working Group will be the lead governance group for monitoring the progress and impact of the Strategy. This group will report progress to Children’s Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis, highlighting achievements and risks where this is necessary and appropriate.

The Children, Young People and Education Committee will also play a role in monitoring progress of delivery through review of the action plan and receipt of regular updates.



CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY 31 JANUARY 2022

| | |
|---------------|--|
| REPORT TITLE: | LOCAL AREA SEND INSPECTION 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 overview of the Wirral local area response to the findings from the joint local area inspection into the effectiveness of the local area in implementing the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The inspection took place between 27 September 2021 and 1 October 2021, conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The findings report, in the form of a letter addressed to both the local authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group is attached at appendix A to this report.

As a result of the findings of the inspection, it has been determined that a written statement of action is required to address areas of significant weakness, as identified. This is a joint written statement on behalf of the local authority and clinical commissioning group.

This report provides a summary of the key areas of development identified by the inspection and the local area response in addressing them, which will form the written statement of action required. The report also highlights the action already undertaken to address the concerns raised from the inspection as well as previous progress made to date.

It should be noted that as part of the inspection process, the local area presented a self-evaluation of its effectiveness in implementing the reforms. In this regard, the areas of strengths and the areas for further improvement identified in the findings letter were reflected and acknowledged in the self-evaluation submitted.

This report and the approach taken are aligned to the priorities of Wirral Council's Plan 2021 - 2026. -Brighter futures for all regardless of their background.

This is not a key decision.

This matter affects all wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

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

1. Consider and comment on the information contained within the report;
2. Endorse the actions carried out to date and the proposed actions to be included in the development of the Written Statement of Action to be submitted to Ofsted; and,
3. Request the Director of Children's, Families and Education submit a progress report in quarter 2 of the calendar year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure that all elected members are aware of the findings of the joint local area SEND inspection and the proposed plans and actions to address the areas of weakness identified.
- 1.2 To ensure that there is robust governance and oversight of the improvement required for SEND across the local area.
- 1.3 To ensure that the written statement of action is approved by elected members of the Council.
- 1.4 To set out a clear and transparent transformation programme which will put children and families at the heart, enabling them to shape service change and pathways so that they meet their needs.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options have been considered due to clear need to see swift improvements in the areas identified in the inspection findings.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Between 27 September 2021 and 1 October 2021, a joint local area SEND inspection was conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The findings report, in the form of a letter addressed to both the local authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group, is attached at appendix A to this report.
- 3.2 The inspection analysis was based around the following key questions:
 - How effective is the local area in **identifying** children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities?
 - How effective is the local area in **meeting the needs** of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
 - How effective is the local area in **improving outcomes** for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- 3.3 In this regard, the inspection findings were based around strengths and weakness relating to these three areas. Evidence was gathered from a range of different sources including discussions with children, young people and their families, professionals from the local authority and NHS. Visits were undertaken to settings and discussions had with key stakeholders in those settings. Information and data were also analysed.

3.4 MAIN FINDINGS - STRENGTHS

- 3.5 The main findings of the report are summarised below.
 - Vulnerable children and young people are helped quickly, and their needs identified well. Young people referred to the youth justice service have an

effective multi-agency assessment and their needs are reviewed regularly. A designated SEND social care officer ensures that parents within social care services are contacted and offered support for any identified need.

- Children with physical disabilities are identified early and swift action put in place to support their education. Good packages of support are put in place as they transition to adulthood to ensure they can live independently.
- Early help professionals are well trained and there is good support to identify and meet need in early years.
- The shared care health systems support the tell it once approach, so families only tell their story once.
- The speech and language integrated therapy approach was recognised as ensuring that all children could be supported to target resource to young people with the most complex needs.
- Youth Voice groups were recognised at influencing strategic direction and leading to positive change. The wider offer of youth clubs and activities provided an inclusive community offer for young people.
- The support provided by WIRED and wider third sector networks was well regarded and highlighted as good practice.
- The 0-19 service learning and development approach to practice to support parents better was highlighted as well as the extended offer from the Family Nurse Partnership to support older young people with SEND and their babies.
- Improvements in reduction of fixed term and permanent exclusions and in the progress at Key stage 1 and 4 for children and young people with SEND was recognised
- The post 16 offer, including the flexible offer from providers and the range of opportunities for young people post 16 was identified as a strength as well as education transition arrangements for post-16.

3.6 MAIN FINDINGS – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 3.7 The main findings of the report are themed below for the purposes of providing a summary of the areas which require response.

Theme 1: Assessment pathways

- 3.8 The report identified delays in the completion of Education, Health and Care Plans and the annual review process which had caused parental frustration and dissatisfaction. The process was not inclusive in listening and acknowledging parents and young person views to develop a co-produced and meaningful plan. As a result the quality of plans were poor and not outcome focussed.
- 3.9 In this regard, the report identified a significant weakness in the quality and timeliness of Education Health and Care assessments and annual reviews.

Theme 2: Communication and co-production with parents and carers

- 3.10 The report identified that parents did not have up to date or useful information to support them and found the current local offer website difficult to navigate.
- 3.11 It stated that parents found it difficult to contact professionals and did not get timely responses and this resulted in high levels of frustration and anxiety amongst families.

Long waiting times to access services further exacerbated stress. This had resulted in more parental complaints, mediations and tribunals.

- 3.12 The report highlighted that many parents and young people were not involved in assessment and planning processes resulting in poor quality plans and objectives which did not suit the needs or wishes of the child.
- 3.13 In this regard, the report identified significant weaknesses around:
- High level dissatisfaction with the area's provision
 - Poor communication with parents and carers across the area
 - The published local offer not being well publicised and not providing parents and carers with the information that they need
 - The lack of meaningful co-production
 - The fractured relationship between the area and the Parent Carer Partnership Wirral and the impact of this on the area's progress in implementing the reforms

Theme 3: Strategic oversight and joint commissioning

- 3.14 The report identified several areas where there was not sufficient data or oversight to monitor and drive improvements in performance. It highlighted that there was not system in place to monitor waiting times around child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHs) and neurodevelopmental assessment pathways which meant the local area could not use information to anticipate pressures and demands to plan and commission effectively as a partnership.
- 3.15 The report also highlighted that the lack of strategic analysis and understand of data meant it was difficult to measure the impact of the area's provision and progress of children and young people.
- 3.16 In this regard, the report identified significant weaknesses around:
- The lack of joint commissioning of services in the area
 - The lack of effective strategic oversight to ensure effectiveness of plans and provision and hold leaders, managers and partners to account
 - The lack of accurate, up-to-date and useful information which informs the area's plans and evaluated the impact of their actions

Theme 4: Inclusive practice

- 3.17 The report highlighted differences in the quality of provision for SEND across the area and the disparity of offer in schools and settings. Lack of robust training and development to support consistent practice had exacerbated inequities and sometimes resulted in escalation of need.
- 3.18 In this regard, the report identified a significant weakness in the graduated response not being consistently applied across all schools and settings.

3.19 LOCAL AREA RESPONSE AND PROGRESS SO FAR

- 3.20 In the immediate weeks following the verbal feedback from the inspection, a sprint plan and governance approach was outlined. A summary of the main improvement areas is detailed below:
- 3.21 **Workstream 1: Needs analysis and data** – The following high-level actions have been identified, each with several specific sub-actions (not included):
- a) Develop a clear analysis of local area need which provides trajectory for planning and joint commissioning
 - b) Fully embed the governance arrangements for SEND ensuring that data and oversight is provided by a new SEND Transformation Board and relevant sub-groups are operational and providing regular updates.
- 3.22 *Progress so far:* Effective partnership working, and collaboration has resulted in the identification of dedicated resources to support the development of a robust dataset and information spanning across multiple organisations which will form the backbone of a robust and accurate needs analysis for the whole local area.
- 3.23 A productive workshop with the Council for Disabled children has helped to lay the foundations for a holistic outcomes framework that will enable local area leaders to better understand how early identification and meeting needs through inclusive practice is helping to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- 3.24 **Workstream 2: Assessment and planning** - The following high-level actions are proposed, each with several specific sub-actions:
- a) Review and refine assessment and planning processes so that they are timelier and engage and involve parents and young people at every step of the way.
 - b) Improve the quality of plans so that they are outcomes-focussed, respond and reflect the voice of children and their parents and clearly outline the actions and intervention required.
- 3.25 *Progress so far:* The initial assessment Panel has been disbanded to prevent barriers in accessing assessments. This provides for a much more inclusive approach to support families and settings.
- 3.26 A new inclusive pathway is being designed around the concept of three WAVES of support. Wave 1 would cover a universal offer that is covered by school provision. The local authority is working with school leaders to explore what support training can be offered to school staff to support this. Wave 2 will look at early intervention support for young that schools have identified of needing additional resource. The team supporting this will be identified by the needs of the child that have been identified. Wave 3 will be statutory support; which leads to an EHCP assessment.
- 3.27 Additional support has been brought into the service to assist with demand management and capacity. 6 additional staff members are covering a combination of plan writing, annual reviews and EHCP coordination. Education Psychology assessments are being commissioned and delivered by an external provider, focussing solely on EHCP assessments. This is being extended by 12 months to ensure that advice can be provided within the 6-week timescale.

- 3.28 Workstream 3: Co-production and communication** - The following high-level actions are proposed, each with several specific sub-actions (not included):
- a) Develop a new local offer site which is accessible for parents/carers and contains relevant up to date information, including where to go if they need help and advice.
 - b) Improve communication with parents so that their experiences of SEND assessment and planning are positive and ensure they are fully involved in co-production activity at all levels.
- 3.29 *Progress so far:* A series of face to face and virtual meetings with parents and carers from across Wirral has been held in community settings and online. Parents have been able to share their experiences and receive answers back. There have been a number different sessions held so far with positive feedback from parents and carers.
- 3.30 A SEND Wirral Facebook page has been set up to act as a key conduit with parents and signpost parents to support. Third sector support groups can advertise their offer to parents and carers which has been well received.
- 3.31 A review of the Parent Carer Partnership has been undertaken and new membership identified. Parents and carers have been asked to nominate themselves for strategic roles on key governance workstreams which sit under the SEND Board. At its last meeting in December, five parent/carer representatives attended and contributed. This was considered a significant step forward in improving the relationship between the parent carer forum and the local authority.
- 3.32 Workstream 4: Inclusive education** - The following high-level actions are proposed, each with several specific sub-actions (not included):
- a) Work in partnership with schools to identify where support and intervention required in identification and meeting need and broker improvement support so that children are identified early, and support put in place to reduce escalation
- 3.33 *Progress so far:* A dedicated learning and development event for headteachers and governors took place at the beginning of December and will form part of a wider continued professional development for schools with specific sessions focused on SEND and inclusion.
- 3.34 The commission of school assurance professionals to review and audit school settings will include a focus on SEND and will enable the local authority to analyse evidence around the quality of practice in schools. This will enable intervention and support to be targeted where it is needed.
- 3.35 The Head of SEND has been undertaking regular visits to schools across the borough to build relationships, share learning and understand the quality of offer provided by individual schools.
- 3.36 Workstream 5: Health and care pathways and support** – The following high-level actions have been identified, each with several specific sub-actions (not included):

- a) Reduce the waiting times for young people accessing services and ensure their intervention is timely and outcome focussed
- b) Ensure that vulnerable children are identified early and assessed in a timely way so that their needs

Progress so far: COVID renewal funding has been identified to support increased capacity within support services to reduce the backlog of waiting times and support pupils accessing support as earlier as possible.

3.37 **Workstream 6: Joint Commissioning** - The following high-level actions are proposed, each with several specific sub-actions (not included):

- a) Accelerate joint commissioning by utilising needs analysis to inform longer term planning and enabling services to be in place to meet children’s needs.

3.38 *Progress so far:* Partners have agreed to fund a dedicated resource to work on a cross-organisational footing to lead and drive the change service redesign based on collaborative commissioning principles.

3.39 Work has progressed to jointly commission a new Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language offer for children and young people.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Achieving significant transformation change requires prioritisation and resource. Work has already progressed to secure cross-organisational funding to facilitate resource across different workstreams. This has included (although not exclusive to):

| Resource area | Funding allocated |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| The appointment of a Joint Commissioning Lead for Children and Young people | Circa £100k |
| Dedicated funding from CCG and local authority to progress data lead role | Circa £50k |
| Additionality into the SEND assessment and planning services | Funding allocation to be reviewed |
| Additionality into Education Psychology assessments | Funding allocation to be reviewed |
| Additionality to support co-production/parent/carer engagement | Funding allocation to be reviewed |
| Programme management resource | Circa £70k |

4.2 Whilst it should be recognised that this is a positive start in providing the additional capacity needed to deliver the Transformation programme required, further investment will be required. During the programme additional investment identified.

4.3 This maybe challenging considering the budget pressures in the local authority and current health system.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The report recognises and responds to the requirements set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the statutory responsibilities on local authorities regarding how services and support are delivered for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities.

5.2 We are likely to face legal challenges if we do not meet our statutory duty.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The WSOA will reference a broad range of activity delivered in the context of SEND on Wirral. As part of the SEND improvement journey, the SEND Transformation Board will retain an overview of any changes to structures and activities that may impact on service delivery.

6.2 Changes to any structures in relation to SEND on Wirral will only be undertaken through report and approval to the SEND transformation Board, taking into account local need, cost benefit and considering other options.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The pace required to accelerate change is significant. Progress will be monitored regularly by the Department for Education and escalated if swift action is not taken, and tangible outcomes identified. Ofsted will return for a re-inspection within 18 months' time, meaning that timescales are challenging for the scale and pace required. Partners across the local area must work quickly to prioritise, resource and drive change to provide both assurance of progress and be able to evidence improvement within the timescale.

7.2 The Council is required to make significant financial changes within the next year to provide assurance to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that budget deficits will be addressed. Whilst statutory services will be protected, the need for investment in services which support children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities should not be discounted. Failure to appropriate resource the improvement required may impact on the ability of the local area to effectively address the weaknesses outlined in the inspection report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Senior partners from across the local area have committed to the improvements needed and the prioritisation required. Leaders from across the education, health and care sector have been identified to sit on the new SEND Transformation Board to monitor and oversee progress on the changes required.

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 This report does not require an EIA, but the associated actions will need and an EIA. These will be completed and reported back in the next update in relation to SEND.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environment and climate implications arising from the report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no community wealth implications at this time.

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APPENDICES

[Appendix A Joint local area SEND inspection letter](#)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[SEND Strategy 2020-2024](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|---|-------------------|
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 14th June 2021 |
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 28th January 2021 |
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 1st December 2020 |
| Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 28th January 2020 |

1 December 2021

Simone White
Director of Children's Services, Wirral
Corporate Director for Children
Wirral Council
PO Box 290
Brighton Street
Wallasey
CH27 9FQ

Simon Banks, Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group Chief Officer
James Backhouse, Local Area Nominated Officer, Wirral Council

Dear Ms White and Mr Banks

Joint local area SEND inspection in Wirral

Between 27 September 2021 and 1 October 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Wirral to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The inspection was led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors including an Ofsted Inspector and a children's services inspector from the CQC.

Inspectors spoke with children and young people with SEND, parents and carers, local authority and National Health Service (NHS) officers. They visited a range of providers and spoke to leaders, staff and governors about how they were implementing the SEND reforms. Inspectors looked at a range of information about the performance of the area, including the area's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with leaders for health, social care and education. They reviewed performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning.

As a result of the findings of this inspection and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has determined that a Written Statement of Action is required because of significant areas of weakness in the area's practice. HMCI has also determined that the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted.

In reaching their judgements, inspectors took account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SEND arrangements in the area. Inspectors considered a range of information about the impact of the pandemic and explored how the area's plans and actions had been adapted as a result.

This letter outlines the findings from the inspection, including some areas of strength and areas for further improvement.

Main Findings

- The area has been too slow to implement the 2014 reforms. Moreover, any changes that have been made by the area have followed the 'letter of the reforms, not the spirit'. Consequently, the lived experience for the majority of children and young people with SEND and their families has not improved. Too many parents and carers told inspectors that 'the system is broken' in Wirral.
- The area's new leadership team has ambitious plans to transform the quality of provision for children and young people with SEND. These plans identify key weaknesses accurately but lack sufficient detail. Leaders have started to undertake consultations with key partners, including parents and carers, children and young people and providers, to better understand the issues. However, parents, carers and providers are yet to be convinced about whether things will improve. This is because their experience over the past few years has been one of constantly changing personnel and lack of continuity. Too often in the past, leaders have not delivered on their promises.
- Many families across Wirral have felt completely let down by the area. Often, families are pushed to the limits, emotionally, financially and physically. They feel overlooked and ignored as well as blamed for asking for the help that their children need. Furthermore, a lack of communication from the area to parents and carers exacerbates their frustrations. This experience is magnified for those parents whose children have hidden disabilities.
- The relationship between area leaders and Parent Carer Forum Wirral is fractured. This has delayed the implementation of planned improvements and has reduced opportunities for co-production (a way of working where children, families and those that provide the services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them). The members of the new leadership team are keen to repair this relationship.
- Parents and carers sing the praises of some teams, frontline workers and managers. Parents and carers are keen to celebrate the positive difference that these professionals make to the lived experience of children, young people and their families day-to-day. It is clear that some schools, teams and individuals 'go above and beyond' to provide a first-rate service.
- New leaders have established key strategic and operational groups to drive improvement. However, the lack of a shared information system has hampered

leaders' ability to produce a sharply focused self-evaluation and action plan. This means that these strategic and operational groups do not have the essential information that they need to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

- The poor quality and lack of timeliness for education, health and care (EHC) assessments and plans are unacceptable. Too many parents and schools are driven to seek private specialist advice in order to mitigate failings in this process. Moreover, families are left in the dark about the progress of these assessments as parents are not told how the process is progressing. Added to this, annual reviews are not processed in a timely manner.
- There are marked differences in the quality of provision for SEND across the area. This means that outcomes for children and young people with similar needs vary between schools and settings. Often, the pockets of best practice are found in those areas which face the greatest challenges. Sadly, too few children and young people benefit from this exemplary, inclusive practice.
- There is no effective joint commissioning of services in the area. Leaders do not have an accurate, up-to-date, sufficiently detailed understanding of the most pressing shared priorities. This hampers meaningful discussion around what services could and should be jointly commissioned. There are some examples of partners working together on small-scale projects. For example, the development of specialist provision to prevent young people with mental health needs requiring hospital admissions.
- The online local offer fails to provide parents with up-to-date, useful information. Too many parents are unaware that the offer even exists. Parents who do visit the local offer website struggle to find the information that they need.
- Local initiatives have helped to reduce the numbers of children and young people excluded from school considerably. This is helping more children and young children to stay in mainstream schools and older young people to move on to meaningful post-16 destinations.
- Despite a poor experience for many children and young people and their families in Wirral, services for the most vulnerable children and young people are routinely timely and of high quality.
- The area is still recovering from the impact of the pandemic. Key health professionals were redeployed to the COVID-19 frontline during the pandemic. This has resulted in increased waiting times for some services as they catch up.

The effectiveness of the local area in identifying children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- The area's most vulnerable children, including children looked after and those known to the youth justice service, have routine checks to identify any new or

emerging needs. For example, all young people referred to the youth justice team receive a multi-agency assessment, including a speech and language assessment. Also, the children looked after nursing team frequently reviews children so that any emerging concerns can be followed up.

- Young children with physical disabilities have their needs identified quickly and appropriate support is put in place swiftly. This helps these children get off to a good start when they begin their schooling.
- Across the area, early years settings have named early years SEND officers. This team provides effective support and training for frontline professionals. This increased expertise among early years staff means that more young children have their needs identified accurately before starting school. This results in more successful transitions into school.
- In order to identify potential social care needs, parents are routinely contacted as part of the EHC assessment process to discuss whether their child and the family have any potential unmet social care needs. When required, this results in a full needs assessment to determine what support is needed. The area has appointed a designated social care officer for SEND to further prioritise the needs of this cohort.

Areas for development

- Parents' views about their children's needs are not always considered. Too often, parents are not believed or are ignored by professionals. This is most prevalent when their children have hidden disabilities. This leads to delays in children and young people having their needs identified in a timely manner.
- The area's agreed graduated response is not followed by all schools and settings. This means that too few children and young people who require support for their SEND benefit from consistent, high-quality provision which ensures that needs do not escalate.
- Children and young people's needs are not always accurately identified. This means that the provision chosen for some children and young people is not suitable. Consequently, these children and young people do not receive appropriate support. This can result in some placements breaking down or children and young people not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Across the area, parents are frustrated by frequent difficulties in contacting professionals. All too often, parents' emails and telephone calls go unanswered. This means that parents and carers often resort to formal procedures to get a response.
- The lack of a robust training and support programme for school leaders, SEND coordinators and staff is a barrier to the effective identification,

assessment and meeting of needs across schools. This exacerbates the inequities and inconsistencies in inclusive practice across the area.

- Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the healthy child programme has not been delivered effectively in the area. Pregnant women do not receive a routine antenatal contact and too few children receive a 12-month developmental assessment. This means that early opportunities to identify needs are missed.
- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, around half of children attending an early years setting did not receive an integrated health and development review at age two to two-and-a-half years. Currently, only one in five children receive this review. Consequently, needs are not identified early enough in young children.
- Capacity issues across the area have resulted in lengthy waiting lists. This means that children and young people are waiting too long to have their needs identified and for support to be put in place. During these long waits, some children and young people's needs escalate. As a result, these children and young people and their families can require more support than if their initial needs had been met in a timely manner.
- The area is not adept at using information to anticipate where pressures and demands for services may arise. The absence of an accurate, up-to-date needs analysis is a significant obstacle to this. This means that leaders cannot be sure that there will be sufficient capacity in the system in future.

The effectiveness of the local area in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- The Wirral 'shared care' system enables partners to view health information from all providers signed up to the scheme. This reduces the need for parents to repeat the same information about their child to different health professionals.
- The speech and language team recently co-produced an integrated therapy review. This new approach reduces the number of appointments that children and young people with complex needs are required to attend. It also promotes the 'tell it once' approach. This area of good practice was recognised by a national award.
- Some older young people with complex needs receive a well-considered package of support from adult social care. This meets their changing needs as they grow up. For example, the increased availability of purpose-built accommodation in Wirral has enabled more of these young people to live independently.

- Parents applaud the positive difference that the portage team makes to the lived experience of very young children with complex needs and their families.
- The Youth Voice group's passionate and committed contribution to the area's strategic work and plans is making a positive difference. For example, the members of this group have developed the knowledge and skills of learning disability nurses through a joint project with a local university.
- Parents value the information and advice provided by the Wirral SEND partnership. This presents some challenge because demand for services is high and the team's capacity is limited. Carers appreciate the support that they receive from Wirral Information Resource for Equality and Diversity (WIRED) carers' support service. Support for parents is further enhanced by the work of voluntary and charitable organisations across the area.

Areas for development

- There is no strategic approach to co-production across the area. While some teams have co-produced aspects of their work, this is not consistent. Many parents and young people do not feel that they are fully involved in making important decisions that affect their lives.
- The quality of EHC plans in Wirral is not good enough. The lack of inclusion of parents' and children's and young people's contributions, poorly written plans and unsuitable objectives means that the plans do not reflect the child or young person and their needs. The processes for considering requests for EHC assessments and agreeing to issue plans lack rigour. There is no representation from health professionals on the decision-making panels. There is also no effective quality assurance to check that EHC plans are fit for purpose.
- The vast majority of EHC assessments are not completed within the 20-week timescale. The lack of capacity in key teams, such as educational psychology and the children's services SEND team, causes considerable delays. In addition, the area does not meet timescales around the annual review process.
- The level of parental dissatisfaction means that there are a high number of complaints, mediations and tribunals. Recently, the area has made arrangements to resolve parental concerns before they escalate. This approach has had some success, but it is too early to see any sustained impact. Crucially, these arrangements do not resolve the root causes of parental dissatisfaction.
- There is a lack of support available for children and young people with sensory needs in the area. Some teams, schools and settings have identified

this gap and have provided information and advice to parents around sensory issues, despite these teams not being commissioned to do so.

- Waiting times for speech and language therapy, the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) and the neurodevelopmental pathway are too long. Too many parents and schools resort to seeking private assessments to try to speed things up. These unreasonable waiting times coupled with poor communication cause children, young people and their families additional stress. There is support available while children and young people wait for some services. However, professionals and parents are not well informed about this support and how to access it.

The effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- Children and young people across the area actively participate in clubs and activities which accommodate a wide range of needs. Young people and their parents speak highly of The Hive Youth Zone. This provides an inclusive environment where young people can access a wealth of activities, events and support. Those parents whose children access short break provision value the support it gives to the whole family.
- The 0 to 19 health and well-being team uses information effectively to make improvements to their service. For example, this team identified concerns around young children's speech and language development. The team used this intelligence to plan and deliver targeted training for frontline staff. This has resulted in an improvement in the speech and language skills of children under five.
- The family nurse service has extended its provision to include young parents with SEND aged 19 to 23 years. This service provides an enhanced level of support to these young people at this critical time. Young parents told inspectors about the positive difference that this support made to them and their babies.
- The area has effectively reduced both fixed-term and permanent exclusions from schools over several years. A range of programmes are helping children and young people with SEND to successfully reintegrate back into education or move into training.
- Across the area, children and young people who require support for their SEND achieve well at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 4.
- One of the area's local colleges has amended their offer to an 'any day guarantee'. This enables young people in key stage 4 to enrol at any point in

the year. This flexible approach is making a positive contribution to minimising the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

- There is an increasing offer of work-based education opportunities across the area, including traineeships, internships and apprenticeships. This is helping more young people gain the skills and experience that they need to secure employment.
- Inspectors heard about extended transition arrangements for young people with SEND moving into post-16 education. These arrangements can start up to two years prior to young people being due to start college. This means that these young people are better prepared for the next stage of their education.

Areas for improvement

- There are shortcomings in the collection, understanding and analysis of data. There is no shared information system which captures important information centrally. This makes it difficult to measure the impact of the area's provision on the progress of children and young people.
- The area does not use performance data effectively to monitor waiting times in some health services. Information about the waiting lists for CAMHS and the neurodevelopmental assessment pathway is not routinely collated to check how long children and young people wait. This has prevented timely remedial action being taken when required.
- Objectives set in EHC plans are often generic and are not well matched to the individual children and young people. This means that objectives do not help to raise expectations for what these children and young people could achieve. Added to this, the area does not carry out the checks needed to reassure themselves that those children and young people in out-of-borough placements and resourced provision achieve well.
- The transitions between children's and adults' services for young people up to age 25 are underdeveloped in health. For some young people with multiple and complex health needs, there is no equivalent adult health service. Some adult health services will not engage with transition planning until the young person reaches their 18th birthday. This increases parents' and young people's anxiety at this key transition point.
- Work to help young people plan and prepare for adulthood does not begin early enough. Furthermore, this work does not have a wide enough reach. There are plans in place to resolve this, but it is too early to know whether these are making the positive difference needed.

The inspection raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of the area.

The area is required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action to Ofsted that explains how the area will tackle the following areas of significant weakness:

- weaknesses in the quality and timeliness of EHC assessments and annual reviews
- the lack of meaningful co-production with parents and carers
- the high level of parental dissatisfaction with the area's provision
- the published local offer not being well publicised and not providing parents and carers with the information that they need
- poor communication with parents and carers across the area
- the fractured relationship between the area and the Parent Carer Partnership Wirral and the impact of this on the area's progress in implementing the reforms
- the lack of joint commissioning of services in the area
- the lack of effective strategic oversight to ensure effectiveness of plans and provision and hold leaders, managers and partners to account
- the lack of accurate, up-to-date and useful information which informs the area's plans and evaluates the impact of their actions
- the graduated response not being consistently applied across all schools and settings.

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland
Her Majesty's Inspector

| Ofsted | Care Quality Commission |
|--|---|
| Andrew Cook Regional Director | Mani Hussain Deputy Chief Inspector, Primary Medical Services, Children Health and Justice |
| Pippa Jackson Maitland HMI Lead Inspector | Jonathon Parry-Hall CQC Inspector |
| Julie Killey Ofsted Inspector | |

Cc: DfE Department for Education
Clinical commissioning group
Director Public Health for the local area
Department of Health
NHS England



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 31 January 2022

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| REPORT TITLE: | ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2023-24 |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION |

REPORT SUMMARY

This report invites the Children, Young People and Education Committee to determine the Authority's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools and the co-ordinated schemes for 2023-2024.

This is a statutory requirement and affects all Wards within the Borough. The Wirral Plan priority "Brighter Futures" is supported by clear and objective admission arrangements in conjunction with a fit for purpose sufficiency strategy.

RECOMMENDATION/S

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

1. Agree the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and the Wirral co-ordinated schemes for 2023-2024 as set out in the appendices to the report.
2. agree the proposed change in the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Woodchurch Road Primary School to 30.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Authority is required to determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools. The Authority is also required to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2023-24. The proposed schemes are attached along with proposed admission numbers for community and controlled schools (Appendices 1 and 2).

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The main arrangements could remain unchanged, however, it is recommended that the variations detailed in section 3 are made for the reasons set out in the report.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 1st September 2021 the Department for Education published a new School Admissions Code. The Wirral schemes for 2021-22 and for 2022-23 were therefore revised and republished in Summer 2021 to reflect changes required by the new Code.
- 3.2 The principal points updated in relation to the Wirral schemes were:
- A new requirement for own admission authority schools to actively “opt-in” to in-year transfer co-ordination on an annual basis
 - Amendment to the definition of previously Looked After Children to include children adopted from overseas.
 - Amendments to the Fair Access Protocol (published separately to the Schemes) in relation to mandatory categories of children, and clarification of the definition of “challenging behaviour”
 - Changes to paragraphs 8.20 of the secondary co-ordinated scheme and 7.8 of the primary co-ordinated scheme to reflect changed status for overseas applicants from within the European Union area and residency requirements.
- 3.3 The co-ordinated schemes for 2023-24 incorporate all prior published amendments. No significant changes have been made to the body of the schemes.
- 3.4 As part of the work to deliver the Pupil Place Planning Strategy (Phase 1), discussions have taken place with schools to progress options. Some recommendations require a Scheme consultation at this point in the academic year in accordance with the School Admissions Code. In this regard, the governing body of Woodchurch Road Primary School have agreed to reduce the admission number from 2023 entry to Foundation 2 onwards, from 71 to 30, ahead of a phased reduction in the school’s use of the existing accommodation, which is substantially larger than is required for a single form entry (210 place) school.

This is intended to reflect changing demographics in the area, allowing the governing body to plan for a financially viable single form entry school and secure community school provision in this small planning area going forward. As a reduction in the admission number this required a consultation before introduction of the new admission number. The new admission number will allow the school to comply with

the Infant Class Size limit of 30 pupils to a qualified teacher and potentially make the financial situation of the school more manageable.

- 3.5 The Pupil Place Planning Phase 1 review involves consideration of options for all schools – both community and own admission authority schools such as Academy and Voluntary Aided schools. In this regard, the Academy Trust of St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School (Birkenhead) have consulted on reducing the Published Admission Number from 60 to 30 with effect from 2023-24.
- 3.6 Outside of Phase 1 of the Review, the governing body of St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School (Upton) has also consulted on a reduction in PAN from 45 to 30 with effect from 2023-24.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none arising directly as a result of this report.
- 4.2 Releasing surplus to requirements accommodation within school buildings to become available for other uses may provide opportunities for co-location of community or education-related services with a potential to generate revenue for the school and/or reduce costs elsewhere.
- 4.3 Accommodation changes may have financial implications in future years and would be subject to the usual building regulations, planning and other requirements as necessary.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) require the Authority to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2023-24.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol apply to all Wirral primary and secondary schools, including Academy schools. There is additional emphasis on the importance of school governing bodies to understand and apply the Admissions Code, Wirral co-ordinated scheme and FAP correctly and fairly, otherwise schools will be open to challenge both at parental appeal and by the Schools Adjudicator and/or Secretary of State.
- 5.3 The date by which the arrangements must be determined is 28th February. These admission arrangements must then be published on the Council’s website by 15th March. The deadline for objections against the admission arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator is 15th May.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Fair Access Protocol requires a Local Authority Clerk to organise Fair Access Panels, prepare paperwork and disseminate Panel decisions to parents and schools. Fair Access Panels include Local Authority officers from various disciplines. The cost of this is met from the Council’s budget.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to determine the admission arrangements by 28th February of the preceding year would contravene the 2014 Admissions Code and associated guidance.
- 7.2 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol apply to all Wirral primary and secondary schools, including Academy schools. There is additional emphasis on the importance of school governing bodies to understand and apply the Admissions Code, Wirral co-ordinated scheme and FAP correctly and fairly, otherwise schools will be open to challenge both at parental appeal and by the Schools Adjudicator and/or Secretary of State

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year, there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period. The previous consultation was held in December 2020-January 2021, covering both primary and secondary schemes.
- 8.2 Amendments to the Schemes were made in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021 and DfE guidance in Summer 2021.
- 8.3 No significant amendments are proposed to the Secondary Scheme, and this does not formally require a consultation. The proposed reduction in the admission number at Woodchurch Road Primary School requires a consultation within the overall primary Scheme.
- 8.4 Both proposed Schemes were published on the Council's website on 8th December 2021 and notified to the standard consultee groups for comments. No comments were received during the consultation period which ended on 19th January 2022.

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 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The consolidation of Woodchurch Road Primary School into a single form of entry school is intended to secure the school for the foreseeable future, alongside the added value the school already provides within it's local community. Investing in children's futures supports the community through quality efficient education provision, enhancing life chances for children, families and the wider community.
- 11.2 Surplus accommodation no longer required for core school purposes could over time be repurposed for other educational, or community based organisational use, minimising waste and energy consumption and using other resources efficiently.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Schools 2023-24
Appendix 2 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Schools 2023-24

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[School Admissions Code](#) (2021)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 11th March 2021 |
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 28th January 2021 |
| Cabinet | 24th February 2020 |
| Cabinet | 25th February 2019 |

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**SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS
FOR MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA
FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024**

This scheme fulfils the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Wirral Council. It builds on the well-established co-ordination of primary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applies to arrangements whereby children are to be admitted to primary schools in the academic year 2023/24 and for subsequent years, subject to any review.

The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Wirral Council ("the Council") and to preferences expressed by Wirral resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities (LA), academies and free schools. Admissions to other schools with independent status are not covered by this scheme.

1.0 Applications for school places for admission into Foundation 2 – the normal admission round

1.1 Wirral Council will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications. Offers will be made by the Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

| Admissions Authority | Category of School |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Wirral Council | All Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools |
| Governing body of school | All Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools |
| Maintaining Local Authority | Non-Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools |

1.2 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Wirral Council are published on the Council's website and in its information booklets, in line with the requirements

set out in the School Admissions Code. The Council's information booklets will be available electronically on the Council's website from 1 September. Hard copies will be obtainable by request from the Council from the start of the autumn term. Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.

- 1.3 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral Council must apply for places in maintained and Academy primary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another Local Authority by completing a Wirral Parental Preference application. On-line applications are recommended and are made through the Council's website: www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Parents who are unable to access the online admission system can request a paper application form from Wirral Council from the start of the autumn term.

The application (online or paper) provides an opportunity for the parent to:

- apply for up to 3 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

- 1.4 Applications for all schools, including Foundation, Trust, Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must be included on the application.

- 1.5 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent to the Council for inclusion within these arrangements.

- 1.6 Parents must return online and paper applications to Wirral Council by 15th January to ensure the allocation of a school place on 16th April or next working day (the National Offer date). Applications received after the published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 16th April or next working day.

- 1.7 Parents can apply for school places only from the 1st September preceding admission to Foundation 2, that is, at the beginning of the academic year in which their child's 4th birthday falls. Children are normally admitted to school at the beginning of the academic year in which their 5th birthday falls.

- 1.8 **Deferred entry and part-time places.** Parents can request deferred entry or part-time attendance up until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday). The request must be made in writing to the Local Authority.

| Child's age 5 birthdate between | First term of compulsory education |
|---|---|
| 1 st January and 31 st March | Summer term (April) |
| 1 st April and 31 st August | Autumn term (September) |
| 1 st September and 31 st December | Spring term (January) |

Parents should note that if a summer born child delays entry to the September after their fifth birthday, the child will ordinarily be expected to enter Year 1, not Foundation 2.

Parents of children born between 1st April and 31st August who wish to delay their child's entry to September, but are intending to request their child enters Foundation 2 rather than Year 1 are advised to apply as usual and to contact Wirral Council in writing prior to 15th January to discuss options (primaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk)

These requests will be considered on the circumstances of each individual case and will also require written agreement in principle from the allocated or intended preferred school. If agreed, deferred entry to Foundation 2 for a full year does not guarantee a place in any school. The child will then be in the year below their chronological age for the rest of their school career, including Key Stage assessments and selective tests for grammar schools. Parents must re-apply by 15th January of the following year and the application will be considered alongside the entry cohort according to the protocols and criteria in place at that time.

1.9 **Applications from separated parents.** Only one application can be processed for each child; therefore it is important that both parties in shared custody arrangements are in agreement over the preferred school(s) named. The parent with whom the child is majority resident should submit the application giving their address as the child's home address– this is the parent with which the child resides most days in a week.

In a situation where a child spends exactly equal time with both parents, the child's main permanent residence should be submitted as their home address. If agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then the Council will accept the application from the parent with whom the child is "ordinarily resident". This is the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday), and is usually where the parent/carer

receives child benefit for the child (where eligible). Proof of address and residence arrangements will be required with the application.

1.10 **Changes of address.** Parents and carers must inform the Council immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Council will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed; e.g. a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date; a signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration. In addition further information may be requested – for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 28th February. Proof of residency received after 28th February will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date. We may remove a place where it has been identified that a change of address has taken place before 28th February and has not been declared.

1.11 **Home address.** This must be the child's permanent home address where he/she lives with a person of parental responsibility as the main carer as defined by the Children Act 1989. Applicants must not give the address of a business, relative, childminder, friend, a temporary address or an address to which they hope to move. The home address must not be where parents have taken out a short term let on a property solely to use its address on the application form without any intention of taking up permanent residence there. Arrangements where parents leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be "ordinarily resident" with that person. The Council will require proof of residence which may include proof of sale of a previous property.

Wirral Council regularly check addresses and **any deliberate misrepresentation will result in a place being withdrawn.** The Council acts on behalf of all Wirral admission authorities and reserves the right to request independent confirmation of the child's place of residence, as felt appropriate. The Mainstream Admissions team may have to share the information provided with other departments of the Council in order to verify the authenticity of pupil's addresses. This may include data held by Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit teams. The Council's Fraud and Investigations

Team may be asked to review the information that has been provided. This may include interviewing and taking a signed statement from the applicant.

- 1.12 **Withdrawal of places.** The Council has the right to withdraw any place offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, or where a place has been offered in error.

2.0 Dealing with Applications

- 2.1 The Council's admissions criteria will be applied to rank the order of priority of each application for community schools and voluntary controlled schools.
- 2.2 The Council will provide Academy and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of those preference forms which include an application for their school by 21st February. Schools may also view applications for their school at any time via the online Portal.
- 2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2014 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 28th February.
- 2.5 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the Council will allocate the highest priority preference.
- 2.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will notify the Governing Bodies of Academy and Voluntary Aided primary schools of those pupils who will be allocated places at their school shortly before 16th April via the online Portal.
- 2.7 In March the Council will inform other Local Authorities of any pupils who are not resident in Wirral and to whom the Council can offer places at Wirral schools.

3.0 Determination of applications for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

- 3.1 **Allocation of places.** Applications for all Community schools and also for Bidston Village Church of England (CE) Primary School, Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Hoylake), Millfields CE Primary School and St Bridget's CE Primary School (West Kirby) will be determined on the following basis:

3.1.1 All children who have applied before 15th January will be eligible for a place so long as there is space within the school's admission number. If there are more applications than there are places available, then eligibility will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:

- Children in care, and children who were in care but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order (“previously in care”), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- Then children who live in the school's catchment zone in the following priority order:
 - Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step siblings living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling. Where there is more than one applicant with a sibling in the same year group, priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from the child's home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.
 - Children who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.

3.1.2 If places remain available, eligibility for children who do not live in the school's catchment area will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities.

- Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with

the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling. Where there is more than one applicant with a sibling in the same year group, priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.

- Pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.

3.1.3 If places remain available at the school after all "on time" applicants have been allocated at the initial allocation point, places will then be allocated to late applications received after 15th January, in accordance with the policy criteria, up to the school's admission number. See paragraph 5.0 below.

3.2 **Aided schools and Academies.** Applications for Academy schools and the Catholic and Church of England voluntary aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.

Christ Church CE Aided Primary School in Birkenhead shares part of its catchment zone with two other schools - Woodchurch Road Primary School and Woodlands Primary School. Priority is given as detailed above in 3.1.1- 3.1.3.

3.3 **Mandatory Allocation.** Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the schools applied for, children resident in Wirral will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate Wirral school where there are places available. "Appropriate " where possible means community school if the parents' preferences indicate preferences for non-denominational education; or a Catholic school or Church of England school if the parents indicated a preference for education in a school of that denomination. The nearest school will be measured on shortest walking distance using the Council's computerised routing system.

3.4 **Special Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan naming the school.

3.5 **Route measurements**

The “shortest road route” from home to school starts at the “seed point” of the home address as provided by the Ordnance Survey compiled from Royal Mail and/or local council data. The starting point connects to the nearest point of the Authority’s digitised routing network. The digitised network is based on the Integrated Transport Network (ITN) supplied by Ordnance Survey and is accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads. The Ordnance Survey ITN dataset is the most accurate road dataset available and is the definitive national road network for Great Britain. The ITN has been augmented by the Authority to take into account public footpaths and alleyways etc. that are approved to be safe for use by children, accompanied as necessary by an adult, by the Authority. The end point of the “shortest road route” is the nearest open gate of the school officially available for use by pupils at the start and end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the Authority based on information provided by the school.

The “shortest road route” is not necessarily a driving route as it may use in part a non-driveable route, such as a footpath. The shortest road route is also not necessarily a walking route, because the measurement is along the centre of the road, not the edge (pavement or equivalent).

The same measuring system must be used for pupils in relation to admission to schools as this treats all pupils equally. Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Authority cannot take a measurement from another system into account. Online systems that parents may use for comparison, including Google Maps and walk-it.com etc. use the free Ordnance Survey Meridian dataset which is far less detailed, and consequently less accurate. They will not have an accurate starting point, will not bar unsuitable paths, and will not include accurate positions for the gates of the school being measured to.

For addresses outside the Authority’s digitised network of approximately 48 square miles, including overseas addresses, an internet mapping solution will be used, e.g. maps.google.co.uk.

4.0 Offer of Places

- 4.1 Parents and carers resident in Wirral who have made an online application will be informed by the Council of the school allocated by e-mail on 16th April or next working day, if a valid e-mail address has been provided. The e-mail will also inform the

parent of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.

- 4.2 Parents and carers resident in Wirral who have submitted a paper application will be informed by the Council of the school allocated in writing. Letters will be despatched on 16th April or next working day, and will be sent by second class post. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.
- 4.3 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Council will allocate them to children whose parents have either lodged an appeal but not been successful or who have expressed a continuing interest in a place at the school concerned. Parents can do this by online by e-mail or by returning the reply slip attached to the paper allocation letter. If there are more children interested in a particular school than places available, the Council will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used for the initial allocation.
- 4.4 All offers of places for schools covered by the Wirral scheme will be issued by the Council. Schools cannot offer places directly to parents.

5.0 Late applications

- 5.1 Applications received after the published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with after the offer of places have been sent to parents on 16th April or next working day. Wirral Council will send details of late applications for Academy and Voluntary Aided schools to the governors of the schools concerned by 23rd April or, for applications received after that date, within five days of receipt. An electronic Portal is in place for all schools to view applications as soon as they are received.
- 5.2 After the closing date for waiting list requests and the closing date for appeals to be lodged has passed, any available places will be re-allocated in accordance with the same order of priority as for the original allocation (see 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above) and the policy criteria for own admission authority schools, including any late applications received up to that point, as a “mini-allocation”. After this, late applications/requests will be dealt with as they are received, including mandatory allocations where no preferred school can be allocated. School places that become available after the mini-allocation takes place will be re-allocated on the basis of the order of priority as set out in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above, and the policy criteria for own admission authority

schools, taking into account any late applications or place requests received up to the date the place is re-allocated.

- 5.3 Parents will be notified in writing by Wirral Council. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal for any Wirral school and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.
- 5.4 Applications for Catholic or Church of England Aided Primary Schools and the Academies received after the published deadline of 15th January will be determined by reference to the schools' published admission arrangements and the governors will inform Wirral Council of the outcome of the applications. Parents will be notified in writing by Wirral Council. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.
- 5.5 Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.

6.0 Waiting Lists

- 6.1 If at the end of the Summer Term a school is believed to be full, the Council will close the procedures and make no more reallocations. However, it may be that places will become available at the beginning of or during the Autumn Term. The Council will keep a list of children whose parents have expressed an interest in obtaining a place at the school if a place becomes available. In August, the Council will write to the parents of those children included in paragraph 4.3 who have expressed a continuing interest. This list will be held open during the Autumn Term. Priority on the list for community and controlled schools will be given to children in accordance with the criteria given in paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. Each added child requires the list to be ranked again in line with the published admission criteria.
- 6.2 The Council will contact parents directly if a vacancy does occur. Schools must not notify parents that a place has become available but must inform the Council in order that an offer can be made by the home Local Authority. The Council will cease to hold the Foundation 2 waiting list at the end of the Autumn Term.

7.0 In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions

- 7.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group, other than at the normal point of entry (i.e. the normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into Wirral from another Local Authority area, moving within Wirral, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.
- 7.2 **Opted-In** – Unless schools have specifically opted out of co-ordinated in-year admissions (see 7.16 below), applications for all schools including Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Transfer Form which can be submitted online via the Wirral Admissions Portal or downloaded from the Wirral School Admissions website. The form allows parents to state up to three school preferences ranked in priority order.
- 7.3 Opted-In schools should not deal with transfer application forms. Any forms received by schools should be forwarded to the Mainstream Admissions team. The Council co-ordinates all parental requests for in-year transfers and placements unless schools have opted out of in-year transfers.
- 7.4 Parents should contact the headteacher of their child's current school prior to application to discuss their request.
- 7.5 Additional information may be required before an application can be processed: this could include proof of residence; passports/visas; PEP for looked after children and so on. Mainstream Admissions team will then forward the application to their current and preferred school(s). Requests for transfer in Y6 other than moves from outside Wirral will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request.
- 7.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will forward the documentation/online application notification to their current and preferred school(s). An electronic Portal is in place for schools to view incoming applications once cleared for processing.
- 7.7 The Council will arrange for children in Years 1 and 2 to start at a community or voluntary controlled primary school in a similar way as Foundation 2 (Reception) age children. The appropriate year group is determined by the chronological age of the child.

Key Stage 1 – The Council will offer children places at their catchment school as long as this will not bring the class size to more than 30, and if the Council cannot offer an alternative school place within two miles of the parents home address.

The Council will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as:

- i) there is room within the admission number; and
- ii) there are not already 30 children in the class.

Where a school, which is below its admission number, has organised its Key Stage 1 into classes of 30 and the only way to admit another child would require the admission authority to take Qualifying Measures (that is, it would require the school to provide additional resources in terms of staff and accommodation), these are grounds on which the Council or other admission authority may refuse an application.

Key Stage 2 – Children are usually entitled to a place at their catchment school even though the school may be on or above its admission number. However, where there is a serious concern, for example about health and safety, there may be circumstances in which a Key Stage 2 place may be refused at a catchment school.

The Council will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as there is room within the admission number.

7.7 **Infant Class Size limit exceptions**

There are a limited number of exceptions to the Infant Class Size limit of 30. These children remain an excepted pupil for the time they are in an infant class, or until the class numbers fall back to the infant class size limit. They are:

- Children with statements of special educational need (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) admitted outside the normal admission round
- Looked after children and previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- Children admitted because of a procedural error made by any admission authority in the original application process
- Children admitted following an appeal upheld by an independent appeals panel

- Children who move into a catchment area outside the normal admission round for whom there is no other school place within a shortest walking distance of 2 miles
- Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admission round who move into a catchment area
- Twins and children from multiple births when one of the siblings is the 30th child admitted
- Children with SEN who are normally taught in an SEN unit attached to the school or who are registered with a special school, but attend some infant classes within a mainstream school

7.8 **Children of UK service personnel.** Places for these children will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official letter with a relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

7.9 **Overseas applications.** Parents who have already moved to the UK from overseas who are British or Irish citizens; or have Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or who are in the UK on a Work Visa or Student Visa; or who are part of a family entering or residing in the UK under the immigration route for British National (Overseas) citizens and their dependents; or who have an endorsed passport showing right of abode; can apply for places for their child at any school covered by this scheme.

Parents or children in these categories who do not yet live in the UK can apply before the date they move to the UK. However, the address to be used in the allocation will be the address that the child is living at on the closing date, unless a subsequent house move has been accepted up to the last date for changes in the coordinated scheme. A UK address will only be used once the child is residing at that address, and evidence will be required of this, as in paragraph 1.10 of this document.

For applicants who are resident overseas and are not yet resident in the UK, the Council may ask to see passports and visas for verification and may confirm visa status with the Home Office if this is unclear or missing. It is the responsibility of foreign nationals, who wish to apply for a state-funded school place, to check that they have a right of abode or that the conditions of their immigration status otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school

Children in the UK on a Standard Visitor visa or a Short-Term Study (English Language) visa; are not entitled to free state education. Any parents wishing to access education for their child whilst visiting the UK may however choose to pay for private education during their stay. The only waiver to this applies to children of visiting academics (parent has an Academic Visitor visa, up to 12 months) who may access free state education during their visit.

Visa over-stayers may be asked to provide evidence of an on-going appeal in order to access free state education for the duration of the appeal process.

- 7.10 **Waiting Lists.** The Council will not keep waiting lists for places in Year 1 and above. Parents may wish to contact schools directly to establish whether there is space in their child's year group prior to completing an in-year transfer request form. The Council will confirm the availability of a place with the school before issuing a formal offer of a place. Schools must not offer places to parents.
- 7.11 The Council will provide Voluntary Aided and Academy schools with relevant on-line and paper form preference information for those applications which include a preference for their school.
- 7.12 The Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided and Academy schools will consider each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Council of their decision within 5 days of receipt of the application.
- 7.13 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest priority eligible preference will take precedence.
- 7.14 All parents will be informed by the Council of the school place allocated by letter (post or email). The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.
- 7.15 If the relevant body is refusing admission the Council will write to the parent advising them that the application has been refused and informing the parent of the legal right to appeal against the decision. Where a house move from outside the area or within Wirral is the reason for requesting an in-year transfer and none of the preferred schools are able to offer a place, the Council will, where possible, indicate on the refusal letter the nearest appropriate school with vacancies at the time of application, where "nearest" uses the shortest walking distance from the Council's computerised

Ordinance Survey Address Point based routing system. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

- 7.16 **Opted-Out** – Schools who wish to “opt-out” of the co-ordinated in-year transfer processes must advise the Council in writing by 30th September 2021 in the first year of introduction, taking effect from 1st November 2021. Schools must then declare in writing to the Council whether they are opting in or out by 31st July in every subsequent year. “Opting out” of co-ordinated in-year transfers is only an option for own admission authority schools. Community and Voluntary Controlled schools will remain opted in for in-year transfers.

There is no option to opt out of the normal admissions round for entry to Foundation 2, it is a statutory requirement that all such applications are co-ordinated centrally by the Council, this runs up until the end of December in the year of entry.

“Opted-out” schools must provide an appropriate application form for parents to complete and **notify the Council of each application within 2 days of receipt. Admission decisions must be notified to parents within 15 school days of receipt**, with an aim to notify parents within 10 school days. Decision outcome letters must include reasons for refusing to offer a place (if applicable) and information on how to appeal, for all applicants.

The school **must notify the Council of the application decision within 2 school days of the decision.**

Opting-out of in-year co-ordination does NOT mean opting out of the Fair Access Protocol; referrals to the Fair Access Protocol must be made within 5 school days of receipt of the application by sending to the Local Authority.

In addition to the above, “opted-out” schools are responsible for ensuring that all decisions are compliant with the School Admissions Code, the general provisions of the Wirral Co-Ordinated Scheme and the school’s own admission policy. They are responsible for all checks including address verification, passports/visas; PEPs for looked after children, obtaining background information from previous schools and for keeping records of all decisions made by the Governing Body or Admissions Sub-Committee.

8.0 Pupils transferring from Infant to Junior Schools

- 8.1 All children who are on roll at one of the Infant Schools listed below at the time of transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 are eligible to transfer to the linked junior even if they do not live in the school's catchment area. Children who live in the catchment area of the Junior School are also eligible.

Black Horse Hill Infant School to Black Horse Hill Junior School

Brackenwood Infant School to Brackenwood Junior School

Greasby Infant School to Greasby Junior School

Overchurch Infant School to Overchurch Junior School

Town Lane Infant School to Higher Bebington Junior School

- 8.2 Admissions to St John's Junior School are detailed by the governing body in accordance with the school's admission arrangements.

9.0 The Fair Access Protocol

- 9.1 All requests for in-year places will be considered with reference to the Council's current admission arrangements and procedures for in year placements.
- 9.2 All schools will take part in the Fair Access Protocol, which is published separately. Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission to school according to the timescales above so that admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.
- 9.3 Children who are looked after and previously looked after, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, and children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school are NOT included in the Fair Access protocol. These children MUST be placed in the school of their carer's preference irrespective of the availability of places in the year group.
- 9.4 **Permanent Exclusions.** For pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and on the roll of a Wirral school it is open to the headteacher to refer the child to Gilbrook Outreach Service or to consider a Managed Move. All such placements will be initially on a trial basis for a minimum of six weeks. Confirmation of placement or the school roll will be subject to a satisfactory report.
- 9.5 Pupils who have been permanently excluded will normally be placed on the roll of Gilbrook School or the Progress School. Schools should contact the Exclusions

Officer as soon as the exclusion has taken place. The Exclusions Officer will consider whether the pupil can be transferred immediately to an alternative primary school. Such transfers will be agreed with the parent and relevant headteacher. All primary schools will take a minimum number of 1, or the number of permanent exclusions in the previous academic year, as the agreed quota of permanently excluded pupils for placement.

- 9.6 Parents retain their legal right to an appeal for a place at any school of their preference. This right is not affected by the decision of the Fair Access Panel.

Admissions Authorities in Wirral

Wirral Council

Community Primary Schools (53)

Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools (4)

The Governing Bodies of:

Academy Schools

Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Junior)

Brackenwood Junior School

Christ Church (Moreton) CE Primary School

Church Drive Primary School

Co-Op Academy Portland

Co-Op Academy Woodslee

Egremont Primary School

Great Meols Primary School

Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School

Poulton Lancelyn Primary School

Stanton Road Primary School

St Joseph's (Birkenhead) Catholic Primary School

Townfield Primary School

Town Lane Infant School

Church of England Aided Primary Schools

Christ Church (Birkenhead) CE Primary School

Dawpool CE Primary School

St Andrew's CE Primary School

St Peter's CE Primary School

| |
|---|
| St Saviour's CE Primary School |
| The Priory CE Primary School |
| Woodchurch CE Primary School |
| Catholic Aided Primary Schools |
| Christ The King Catholic Primary School |
| Holy Cross Catholic Primary School |
| Ladymount Catholic Primary School |
| Our Lady and St Edwards Catholic Primary School |
| Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School |
| St Alban's Catholic Primary School |
| St Anne's Catholic Primary School |
| St John's Catholic Infant School |
| St John's Catholic Junior School |
| St Joseph's (Upton) Catholic Primary School |
| St Joseph's (Wallasey) Catholic Primary School |
| St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School |
| St Paul's Catholic Primary School |
| St Peter & St Paul Catholic Primary School |
| St Peter's Catholic Primary School |
| St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School |
| Joint Denominational Aided Primary Schools |
| Holy Spirit Catholic and CE Primary School |

A full list and map is provided in the Council's information booklets for parents, available on-line at www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

* Status subject to confirmation at time of publication.

PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR 2023-24**WIRRAL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

| SCHOOL | ADMISSION NUMBER |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 2023-2024 |
| Barnston Primary | 45 |
| Bedford Drive Primary | 60 |
| Bidston Avenue Primary | 60 |
| Black Horse Hill Infant | 60 |
| Black Horse Hill Junior | 60 |
| Bidston Village CE Primary School | 52 |
| Brackenwood Infant | 60 |
| Brookdale Primary | 30 |
| Brookhurst Primary | 30 |
| Castleway Primary | 30 |
| Cathcart Street Primary | 30 |
| Devonshire Park Primary | 60 |
| Eastway Primary* | 30 |
| Fender Primary | 42 |
| Gayton Primary | 30 |
| Greasby Infant | 60 |
| Greasby Junior | 60 |
| Greenleas Primary | 45 |
| Grove Street Primary | 60 |

| SCHOOL | ADMISSION NUMBER |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | 2023-2024 |
| Heswall Primary | 30 |
| Heygarth Primary | 60 |
| Higher Bebington Junior* | 96 |
| Hillside Primary | 30 |
| Hoylake Holy Trinity CE Primary | 45 |
| Irby Primary | 30 |
| Kingsway Primary | 25 |
| Leasowe Primary | 30 |
| Lingham Primary* | 57 |
| Liscard Primary | 90 |
| Manor Primary | 30 |
| Mendell Primary | 30 |
| Mersey Park Primary | 60 |
| Millfields CE Primary | 30 |
| Mount Primary | 48 |
| New Brighton Primary | 90 |
| Overchurch Infant | 90 |
| Overchurch Junior | 103 |
| Park Primary School | 60 |
| Pensby Primary | 30 |
| Prenton Primary | 60 |
| Raeburn Primary | 60 |
| Riverside Primary | 30 |

| SCHOOL | ADMISSION NUMBER 2023-2024 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rock Ferry Primary | 45 |
| Sandbrook Primary | 30 |
| Somerville Primary | 90 |
| St. Bridget's CE Primary | 60 |
| St. George's Primary* | 120 |
| Thingwall Primary | 30 |
| Thornton Hough Primary | 25 |
| Well Lane Primary | 30 |
| West Kirby Primary | 40 |
| Woodchurch Road Primary | 30 |
| Woodlands Primary | 45 |

*Note that the status of these (and potentially other) primary schools is subject to change at time of determination. These tables will be updated accordingly should this occur.

**SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS
FOR MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA
FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024**

This scheme fulfils the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Wirral Council. It builds on the well-established coordination of secondary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applied for admissions to secondary schools in the academic year 2023/24 and for subsequent years, subject to any review.

The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Wirral Council ("the Council") and to preferences expressed by Wirral resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities, academies and free schools. Admissions to other schools with independent status are not covered by this scheme.

1.0 Applications for school places for admission into Year 7 - the normal admission round

1.1 Wirral Council will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications. Offers will be made by the Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

| Admissions Authority | Category of School |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Wirral Council | All Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools |
| Governing body of school | All Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools |
| Maintaining Local Authority | Non-Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools |

1.2 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Wirral Council are published on the Council's website and in its information booklets, in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code. The Council's information booklets will be available electronically on the Council's website from 1 September. Hard copies are

obtainable by request from the Council at the start of the autumn term. Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.

- 1.3 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral Council must apply for places in maintained secondary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another Local Authority by completing the Wirral Parental Preference application. On-line applications are recommended and are made through the Council's website: www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Parents of Year 6 pupils who are unable to access the online admission system can request a paper application form from Wirral Council from the start of the autumn term.

The form (online or paper) provides an opportunity for the parent to:

- apply for up to 5 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

- 1.4 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent to the Council for inclusion within these arrangements.

- 1.5 Preference forms should be returned to Wirral Council by 31st October to ensure the allocation of a school place on 1st March or next working day (the National Offer date). Applications received after the published deadline of 31st October will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 1st March or next working day.

- 1.6 **Applications from separated parents.** Only one application can be processed for each child; therefore it is important that both parties in shared custody arrangements are in agreement over the preferred school(s) named. The parent with whom the child is majority resident should submit the application giving their address as the child's home address– this is the parent with which the child resides most days in a week.

In a situation where a child spends exactly equal time with both parents, the child's main permanent residence should be submitted as their home address. If agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then the Council will accept the application from the parent with whom the child is "ordinarily resident". This is the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday), and is usually where the parent/carer receives child benefit for the child (where eligible). Proof of address and residence arrangements will be required with the application.

- 1.7. **Changes of address.** Parents and carers must inform the Council immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on

the application form. The Council will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed; e.g. a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date; a signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration. In addition further information may be requested – for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 1st January. Proof of residency received after 1st January will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date. We may remove a place where it has been identified that a change of address has taken place before 1st January and has not been declared.

- 1.8 **Home address.** This must be the child’s permanent home address where he/she lives with a person of parental responsibility as the main carer as defined by the Children Act 1989. Applicants must not give the address of a business, relative, childminder, friend, a temporary address or an address to which they hope to move. The home address must not be where parents have taken out a short term let on a property solely to use its address on the application form without any intention of taking up permanent residence there. Arrangements where parents leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be “ordinarily resident” with that person. The Council will require proof of residence which may include proof of sale of a previous property.

Wirral Council regularly check addresses and **any deliberate misrepresentation will result in a place being withdrawn.** The Council acts on behalf of all Wirral admission authorities and reserves the right to request independent confirmation of the child’s place of residence, as felt appropriate. The Mainstream Admissions team may have to share the information provided with other departments of the Council in order to verify the authenticity of pupil’s addresses. This may include data held by Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit teams. The Council’s Fraud and Investigations Team may be asked to review the information that has been provided. This may include interviewing and taking a signed statement from the applicant.

- 1.9 **Withdrawal of places.** The Authority has the right to withdraw any place offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, or where a place has been offered in error.

2.0 Dealing with Applications

- 2.1 The Council's admissions criteria will be applied to rank the order of priority of each application for community schools.
- 2.2 The Council will provide Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of applicants for their school by 15th January. Details of preferences for a school place in the area of another Local Authority will be sent to that Authority along with any details and supporting evidence provided by the parent by 1st January.
- 2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2014 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and are required to notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 30th January.
- 2.5 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the Council will allocate the highest priority preference.
- 2.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will notify the Governing Bodies of Wirral Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools of those pupils who will provisionally be allocated places at their school by 13th February.
- 2.7 When the Council receives from other Local Authorities details of their provisional allocation for Wirral children seeking places in schools maintained by them, the Council will then offer the highest preference if they are eligible for more than one school.
- 2.8 On 23rd February Wirral Council will inform schools and neighbouring Authorities of the final allocations. On-line applicants will receive an e-mail notification on 1st March (or next working day). Paper form applicants will receive a letter posted by second class post on 1st March (or next working day).

3.0 Determination of applications for Community schools

- 3.1 Each secondary school has a published admission number. Places will be allocated up to but not beyond this number.
- 3.2 All children who have applied before 31st October will be eligible for a place so long as there is space within the school's admission number. If there are more applications than there are places available, then eligibility for community schools will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:
 - Children in care, and children who were in care but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order ("previously in

care”) including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

- Pupils who have a medical reason for attending a particular school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence. A letter in support from a senior health care professional will be required as evidence which must make it clear why only this school is appropriate for your child’s medical needs.
- Pupils who have a brother or sister of statutory school age (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when the pupil starts school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school.
- Pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child’s home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council’s computerised routing system.

3.3 If places remain available at the school after all “on time” applicants have been allocated, places will then be allocated to late applications received after 31st October according to the admissions criteria, up to the school’s admission number.

3.4 **Multiple births.** For community schools, where the final place in a year group is offered to one of twins (or triplets etc.) it will be our policy to admit the other twin even if that means going above the admission number.

3.5 Applications for Academy, Foundation, Trust and Aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.

3.6 **Mandatory Allocation.** Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the schools applied for, children resident in Wirral will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate Wirral school where there are places available. “Appropriate “ where possible means community school if the parents’ preferences indicate preferences for non-denominational education; or a Catholic school if the parents indicated a preference for education in a school of that denomination. The nearest school will be measured on shortest walking distance using the Council’s computerised routing system.

3.7 **Special Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school.

A Health Care Plan does not give any particular priority for admission to a specific school.

3.8 **Route measurements**

The “shortest road route” from home to school starts at the “seed point” of the home address as provided by the Ordnance Survey compiled from Royal Mail and/or local council data. The starting point connects to the nearest point of the Authority’s digitised routing network. The digitised network is based on the Integrated Transport Network (ITN) supplied by Ordnance Survey and is accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads. The Ordnance Survey ITN dataset is the most accurate road dataset available and is the definitive national road network for Great Britain. The ITN has been augmented by the Authority to take into account public footpaths and alleyways etc. that are approved to be safe for use by children, accompanied as necessary by an adult, by the Authority. The end point of the “shortest road route” is the nearest open gate of the school officially available for use by pupils at the start and end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the Authority based on information provided by the school.

The “shortest road route” is not necessarily a driving route as it may use in part a non-driveable route, such as a footpath. The shortest road route is also not necessarily a walking route, because the measurement is along the centre of the road, not the edge (pavement or equivalent).

The same measuring system must be used for pupils in relation to admission to schools as this treats all pupils equally. Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Authority cannot take a measurement from another system into account. Online systems that parents may use for comparison, including Google Maps and walk-it.com etc. use the free Ordnance Survey Meridian dataset which is far less detailed, and consequently less accurate. They will not have an accurate starting point, will not bar unsuitable paths, and will not include accurate positions for the gates of the school being measured to.

For addresses outside the Authority’s digitised network of approximately 48 square miles, including overseas addresses, an internet mapping solution will be used, e.g. maps.google.co.uk.

4.0 Admission to Grammar Schools

- 4.1 Admissions authorities for the grammar schools in Wirral will allocate places only to children who have achieved the required standard. If they are oversubscribed with children who have achieved the standard, they will not be able to offer places to all; they will use other non-academic criteria to decide which children should be offered places.
- 4.2 **Request for Assessment.** Parents who wish their child to be assessed for non-Catholic grammar school education should register with Wirral Council by **31st May in Year 5** by completing either the online or paper Request for Assessment form.
- 4.3 The Council administers the assessment arrangements for Calday Grange Grammar School, West Kirby Grammar School, Wirral Grammar School for Boys and Wirral Grammar School for Girls. The grammar schools have criteria to determine which children will be given places if more children achieve the standard than there are places available.
- 4.4 Parents who wish their children to be assessed for a place at Upton Hall School FCJ or St. Anselm's College must follow the procedures for requesting an assessment set out by those schools; those children will be assessed by the schools themselves.
- 4.5 **The selection tests.** The assessment is based on the results of a test comprising two papers that pupils take in Autumn of Year 6. The tests have been designed to predict a pupil's potential performance at secondary school and so preparation for the tests is not necessary. However, familiarisation materials containing sample questions will be available by 30th June to help children prepare for the tests. To ensure that children are not disadvantaged because of their date of birth, in each case the score is age standardised to take account of each child's age in years and completed months. A total weighted score is calculated from the Verbal, Maths and Non-verbal components, for boys and girls. Children who reach the qualifying score will be deemed to have reached the required grammar school standard.
- 4.6 At the end of the process, the Council will have a list of the children who have reached the qualifying score. This does not necessarily mean that they will go to a grammar school; that will depend on the number of preferences that we have for the grammar schools. If a grammar school is oversubscribed, the governors use other criteria to decide who should be given places.

4.7 The Council will send the outcome of the assessment tests by e-mail to parents who have provided a valid e-mail address on their request for assessment form within 6 weeks of the assessment date. Postal notification will be despatched to all other parents on the same date as e-mails are sent out, by first class post.

4.8 A late test will take place later in the Autumn term for pupils who were registered to take the test but were unable to do so due to illness or absence on the main test date. No other arrangements will be made to assess children if request forms were received after 31st May, unless they have moved from another part of the country. Parents should still submit a preference form before 31st October naming at least one grammar school. If their child does not meet the grammar standard, any grammar preferences will be withdrawn.

5.0 Determination of applications for Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools

5.1 The governing bodies of Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools publish their own admission arrangements which include the criteria which they will use to determine priorities if their school is oversubscribed.

5.2 **Special Educational Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan naming the school.

6.0 Offer of Places

6.1 Where online applications have been received from parents resident in Wirral, the parent or carer making the online application will receive their offer by e-mail on 1st March (or next working day). Parents applying on a paper form will be informed in writing by second class post by the Council posted on 1st March (or next working day) of the school allocated to their child.

6.2 This will include the allocation of a place in a school of another Local Authority if the parent's application for a place there has been successful. The letter or e-mail will also inform parents of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter or e-mail notifying them of the outcome of their application.

7.0 Late Applications

7.1 Preferences which are received on or after 1st November will be dealt with after places have been allocated on 1st March (or next working day). At that point some schools may be full and no more places will be allocated at those schools. In the

case of schools which have places available, places will be allocated up to the school's admission number in accordance with the arrangements described in paragraphs 3 and 5.

- 7.2 Late applications for grammar schools will require separate arrangements for testing. See 4.9 above.
- 7.3 Parents will be notified in writing by Wirral Council. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.
- 7.4 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Council will re-allocate them up to the school's admission number. If there are more children interested in a particular school than places available, in the case of Community schools the Council will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used for the initial allocation. In most cases the re-allocation will be made depending on where the children live. If this is the case, the Council will keep a list in order of those who will have priority because they live nearer the school in question.
- 7.5 If at the end of the Summer Term a school is believed to be full, the Council will close the procedures and make no more reallocations. However, it may be that places will become available at the beginning of or during the Autumn Term. For community schools, the Council will keep a waiting list of children whose parents are interested in obtaining a place at the school if a place becomes available, following the same criteria as when places were first offered. The waiting list will be kept open until the last day of the autumn term.

8.0 In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions

- 8.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group, other than at the normal point of entry (i.e. the normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into Wirral from another Local Authority area, moving within Wirral, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.
- 8.2 **Opted-In** - Unless schools have specifically "opted out" of co-ordinated in-year admissions applications (see 8.19 below) applications for all schools including Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Wirral Transfer Form which can be submitted on the Wirral Admissions

Portal or on a transfer form available on the Wirral Admissions website. The form allows parents to state up to three school preferences ranked in priority order.

- 8.3 Opted-In schools should not deal with transfer application forms. Any forms received by schools should be forwarded to the Mainstream Admissions team of Wirral Council. The Council coordinates all parental requests for in-year transfers and placements unless schools have opted-out of in-year transfers.
- 8.4 Parents are advised to contact the headteacher of their child's current school to discuss their request prior to submitting an application.
- 8.5 The Mainstream Admissions Team will then request completion of appropriate documentation from their current school to forward to their preferred school. Requests for transfer in Y10 and Y11 will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request. Requests for transfer in these year groups due to relocation to Wirral from another area or country will be processed automatically.
- 8.6 For transfers between Wirral schools, the Council will request from the Headteacher of the child's current or previous school, information relating to the child's curriculum record, attendance and behaviour. The headteacher of the school must sign the form and return it to Mainstream Admissions within 5 school days. Where a child has relocated to Wirral from another area or country, this information will not be requested by the Council.
- 8.7 The background information and any relevant documentation from other agencies such as the Attendance Team, social worker, educational psychologists and so on (where provided), will then be forwarded to the Headteacher of the requested school(s). Where parents have applied online, the application is available for schools to view on an online Portal; paper applications will be forwarded alongside the background information.
- 8.8 The governing body of the requested school should reply to the Council within 10 school days of receipt of the application notifying the decision whether a place will be offered.
- 8.9 If the school believes that the child should be considered under any of the elements of the Fair Access Protocol, this must be notified to the Mainstream Admissions team within 5 school days of receipt of the application. Where it would be helpful, an Attendance Officer, Exclusions Officer or Managed Move Officer may facilitate meetings between the parents and the schools involved in order to resolve any difficulties.

- 8.10 For Community Schools the Council will consider all available information and decide whether to agree or refuse the request within 10 school days of receipt of the application.
- 8.11 If a parent expresses a preference for one or more of the grammar schools, then their child will be assessed by the school or schools concerned and a decision made by the governing body as to whether to offer a place. The governing body will then inform the Council of the outcome of the application.
- 8.12 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest eligible preference will take precedence. Headteachers will be informed of the decision.
- 8.13 All parents will be informed by the Council of the school place allocated by letter and advised to contact the headteacher of the school to arrange admission. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.
- 8.14 In accordance with the School Admissions Code admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child solely because:
- (a) they have applied later than other applicants;
 - (b) they are not of the faith of the school in the case of a faith school;
 - (c) they have followed a different curriculum at their previous school;
 - (d) information has not been received from their previous school;
 - (e) they have missed entrance tests for selective places.
- 8.15 Parental preference must be met unless the school believes that do so would "prejudice the efficient education or the efficient use of resources", under Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In effect, schools are expected to offer a place if there are places available in the year group. Parents who are refused a place have a right to an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Schools considering refusing to offer a place when places are available in the year group should consider whether they believe their decision to refuse was one that a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case, as the onus will be on the school to prove prejudice.
- 8.16 **Challenging behaviour:** The Admissions Code says that if a governing body does not want to admit a child with challenging behaviour as an in-year transfer, even though places are available, it must refer the case to the local authority under the Fair Access Protocol. The definition of "challenging behaviour" is set out in the Fair

Access Protocol. Any such cases must be raised with the local authority within 5 working days of receiving the transfer paperwork. Children not meeting the Fair Access definition of “challenging behaviour” must be considered as in year transfers. Fair Access does not apply to a looked after child, previously looked after child or a child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school as these children MUST be admitted.

- 8.17 If the request is refused, headteachers are informed of the decision and parents are informed in writing and given details of their legal right to appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. If a parent lodges an appeal, copies of the relevant documentation will be sent to the preferred school.
- 8.18 The time taken for a transfer request to be processed should be as short as possible. The Council expects that parents will be informed of the outcome of their request within 15 school days, however this may take significantly longer where background information is not received in a timely manner, further information is required in order to process the application such as visa or address verification, the application requires an assessment for a selective school or the application is referred under the Fair Access Protocol.
- 8.19 **Opted-out** – Schools who wish to opt-out of the co-ordinated in-year transfer processes must advise the Council in writing by 30th September 2021 in the first year of introduction, taking effect from 1st November 2021. Schools must then declare to the Council in writing whether they are opting in or out annually by 31st July in every subsequent year.

This option only applies to own-admission authority schools, Community schools will remain opted-in for in-year transfers.

There is no option to “opt out” of the normal admissions round for entry to Year 7, it is a statutory requirement that all such applications are co-ordinated centrally by the Council.

“Opted-out” schools must provide an appropriate application form for parents to complete and **notify the Council of each application within 2 days of receipt. Admission decisions must be notified to parents within 15 school days of receipt**, with an aim to notify parents within 10 school days. Decision outcome letters must include reasons for refusing to offer a place (if applicable) and information on how to appeal, for all applicants.

The school **must notify the Council of the application decision within 2 school days of the decision.**

Opting-out of in-year co-ordination does NOT mean opting out of the Fair Access Protocol; referrals to the Fair Access Protocol must be made within 5 school days of receipt of the application by sending to the Local Authority.

In addition to the above, opted-out schools are responsible for ensuring that all decisions are compliant with the School Admissions Code, the general provisions of the Wirral Co-Ordinated Scheme and the school's own admission policy. They are responsible for all checks including addresses, passports/visas; PEPs for looked after children, obtaining background information from previous schools and for keeping records of all decisions made by the Governing Body or Admissions Sub-Committee.

8.20 Children of UK service personnel. Places for these children will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official letter with a relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

8.21 Overseas applications. Parents who have already moved to the UK from overseas who are British or Irish citizens; or have Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or who are in the UK on a Work Visa or Student Visa; or who are part of a family entering or residing in the UK under the immigration route for British National (Overseas) citizens and their dependents; or who have an endorsed passport showing right of abode; can apply for places for their child at any school covered by this scheme.

Parents or children in these categories who do not yet live in the UK can apply before the date they move to the UK. However, the address to be used in the allocation will be the address that the child is living at on the closing date, unless a subsequent house move has been accepted up to the last date for changes in the coordinated scheme. A UK address will only be used once the child is residing at that address, and evidence will be required of this, as in paragraph 1.10 of this document.

For applicants who are resident overseas and are not yet resident in the UK, the Council may ask to see passports and visas for verification and may confirm visa status with the Home Office if this is unclear or missing. It is the responsibility of foreign nationals, who wish to apply for a state-funded school place, to check that they have a right of abode or that the conditions of their immigration status otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school

Children in the UK on a Standard Visitor visa or a Short-Term Study (English Language) visa; are not entitled to free state education. Any parents wishing to access education for their child whilst visiting the UK may however choose to pay for private education during their stay. The only waiver to this applies to children of visiting academics (parent has an Academic Visitor visa, up to 12 months) who may access free state education during their visit.

Visa over-stayers may be asked to provide evidence of an on-going appeal in order to access free state education for the duration of the appeal process.

9.0 The In Year Fair Access Protocol

- 9.1 All requests for in-year places will be considered with reference to the Council's current admission arrangements and procedures for in year placements. The majority of requests will be agreed or refused by admission authorities with reference to two important factors: parental preference, and the availability of places within the relevant year group.
- 9.2 All Wirral schools will take part in the Fair Access Protocol, which is published separately. Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission to school according to the timescales above so that admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.
- 9.3 The categories of children who can be considered under the Fair Access Protocol are set out in that document. Children who are looked after and previously looked after, and children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school are NOT included in the Fair Access protocol. These children MUST be placed in the school of their carer's preference irrespective of the availability of places in the year group.
- 9.4 Parents retain their legal right to an appeal for a place at any school of their preference. This right is not affected by the decision of the Fair Access Panel. Parents do not need to wait for a Fair Access Panel decision prior to submitting an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.

| Admission Authorities in Wirral | |
|--|--|
| Wirral Council | |
| Community Secondary Schools (1) | |
| Mosslands School | |
| The Governing Bodies of: | |

| Academy Schools |
|---|
| Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Senior) |
| Calday Grange Grammar School for Boys |
| The Co-Op Academy Bebington |
| Hilbre High School |
| Oldershaw School |
| Prenton High School for Girls |
| St Anselm's College |
| St John Plessington Catholic College |
| St Mary's Catholic College |
| The Birkenhead Park School |
| Upton Hall School FCJ |
| Weatherhead High School for Girls |
| West Kirby Grammar School for Girls |
| Wirral Grammar School for Boys |
| Wirral Grammar School for Girls |
| Woodchurch High School |
| Foundation Schools |
| Pensby High School |
| Ridgeway High School |
| South Wirral High School |

* Status subject to confirmation.

A full list of schools and a map showing locations is provided in the Council's information booklets for parents, available on-line at

www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions

The scheme will be amended if there are further changes to the status of schools.

PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR WIRRAL COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

| SCHOOL | ADMISSION NUMBER 2023 – 2024 |
|------------------|---|
| Mosslands School | 225 |

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CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY 31 JANUARY 2022

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| REPORT TITLE: | POLLING PLACES REVIEW: SCHOOLS |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE |

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings following a review undertaken in respect to the use of Schools which are currently used as polling places within Wirral for the purposes of Local Authority, Parliamentary and other elections.

The report details guidance on selecting polling places, the number of Schools currently used in the borough and outlines alternative polling places which have been identified by the Returning Officer. Local ward members have been consulted in respect to options and costs associated with the hire of alternative venues detailed in the exempt appendix 2 to the report.

This report has been considered by The Regulatory and General Purposes Committee on 20 January 2022. The Returning Officer has asked for this report to be presented to the Children, Young People and Education committee for information.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to note the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 A full review of those schools within Wirral which are used as Polling Places has been undertaken by the Returning Officer. It is good practice to regularly review polling places and following the elections held in May 2021, the Returning Officer has carried out a comprehensive programme of area inspections and visits. Options, associated costs, and member consultation responses are detailed in appendix 1 of the report. The Returning Officer has asked for this report to be presented to the Children, Young People and Education committee for information.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 An option would be to continue to use all those Schools which are currently used as Polling Places. Alternative options have been presented to the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee for consideration and discussion. Where no alternative or viable options could be identified, this has been clearly identified in the report.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 All Local Authorities in Great Britain must review their polling districts and places every four years. Wirral completed a statutory review of all polling districts and places in 2019. This review has been requested by the Returning Officer and is in addition to the statutory review.

When considering the overall suitability of a polling place or polling station the following criteria are considered:

External areas access and facilities:

Location:

- Is it reasonably accessible within the polling district?
- Is the building clearly identifiable?
- Does it avoid barriers for the voter such as steep hills, major roads, rivers, etc.?
- Does the building have level access or an alternative disabled route?
- Are the doors wide enough, and light enough, to be opened by someone using a motorised scooter / wheelchair?
- Are there convenient transport links?
- Are there adequate parking facilities for disabled people and polling station staff?

Internal areas access and facilities:

Entrance doors & Corridors:

- Are all external and internal doors easy to open?
- Are there any internal steps or hazards?
- Is the floor covering nonslip?
- Is there adequate heating and lighting?
- Are there toilet facilities for staff?
- Are there kitchen facilities for staff?

Size:

- Is there sufficient space inside to comfortably accommodate staff, voters, polling agents and observers?
- Is there suitable furniture available for staff and voters, where required?
- Can it accommodate more than one polling station if required?
- If multiple polling stations are required, is the polling place capable of accommodating all voters going into and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?

Availability:

- Is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections?
- Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development?

Accessibility:

- Is the building accessible to all those entitled to attend the polling place?

- 3.2 Wirral has 103 polling places of which 41 are schools. Of those 41 schools, 28 utilise an In-Service Training (INSET) day for the poll. The use of an INSET day is agreed well in advance with Head teachers. The remaining 13 schools can stay open to pupils.
- 3.3 The Returning Officer has a statutory right to use, free of charge, schools maintained or assisted by the Council as well as those schools that receive grants made out of moneys provided by Parliament. The decision to close a school, due to use of the school or part thereof as a polling place, falls on the headteacher and this will usually depend upon whether arrangements can be made for voting to take place separately from the rest of the school premises. Where possible, the Returning Officer and the school will make such arrangements for the school to remain open, however, pupil safety must always be considered as paramount and if the school decides to close on the day of the poll and it is not reasonably practicable to arrange an alternative day to try and make up the lost education, the school will be treated as if it had met the requisite 190 days for the purposes of the school year regulations.
- 3.4 Clear guidance is provided to schools on this matter so there should be no misunderstanding about the legal position and the need for schools to co-operate in making rooms available as a polling place. Any reluctance to use schools as polling places despite the statutory position would lead to an increase in the use of private buildings or mobile units even where the most reasonable facilities could be provided within a school which would then incur additional costs.
- 3.5 Ideally, there would be the choice of a range of fully accessible buildings, conveniently located for electors in the area. In practice, however, the choice of polling place will often be very limited, and a school deemed the only suitable venue that complies with the Returning Officer's obligations.
- 3.6 The Government's; guidance is set out in the document "The Government's approach to elections and referendums during COVID-19: additional information for electoral administrators, candidates, campaigners and voters". This states as follows

"Use of schools as elections venues

The Government is working with partners to help to ensure that any disruption to children's education is kept to an absolute minimum whilst allowing Returning Officers to run polls effectively. Given the importance of avoiding any further disruption to education, schools should not be used where alternative venues are available. The use of schools is particularly discouraged where it would result in closure, and the Government has asked that Returning Officers work together with Head Teachers to explore all possibilities that would allow the school to remain open, such as by using only part of the premises, and taking adequate COVID-secure and safeguarding measures to allow pupils to remain on-site.

The Government is providing support to Returning Officers to explore the use of other community or commercial facilities, and to minimise disruption to schools where they are the only available option.

The Government appreciates however that in some cases the use of schools as polling stations is unavoidable.”

- 3.7 At the request of the Returning Officer a full review has been undertaken to see if there are any opportunities to reduce the number of schools used as polling stations. The Returning Officer has undertaken this review by initially contacting all the schools, that currently utilise an INSET day, to ascertain if there were any suitable venues within the vicinity of the schools. Relevant Ward Councillors have been consulted and offered suggestions for venues. Ward maps and google maps have been used to plan visits to polling districts to assess the suitability of venues. 26 potential alternative buildings have been identified. There were no suitable alternative buildings identified in 5 of the polling districts.
- 3.8 Further visits have been made to polling districts by election officers to investigate if any other buildings, such as parish centres, public houses, or commercial halls could be identified. Site visits have been conducted at the 26 alternative venues. Of the 26 visits it was determined that 7 venues could be suitable alternatives. The other 19 venues were either unsuitable as polling places, outside of the specific polling district / ward, the owners did not want to be used as a polling place or were the subject of objections by Ward Councillors.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The annual budget set for Elections is £341,400 (2021/2022).
- 4.2 Polling stations costs in 2021 were £27,000. The cost of polling stations increased from £21,000 to £27,000 in May 2021 due to changing 8 venues: 6 schools and 2 council venues (no longer in use) to private venues. Although an element of the increase can be attributed to Covid costs this must remain as a consideration for future elections. Covid cleaning may continue to form part of the hire charge. The hire cost for a school is between £0- £100. The hire charge for a private venue can be anywhere between £200- £1000.
- 4.3 If all proposals are implemented the anticipated additional cost will be an additional £3299.08, taking the cost of polling stations up to £30,299.08. Savings will have to

be made from other elements of the election budget. No external grants or Covid grants are expected from Central government for 2022 elections.

- 4.4 See appendix 2 for costs of additional hire charges. Appendix 2 is exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 Wirral Borough is divided into Polling Districts and it has designated Polling Places for each Polling District. The term 'Polling District' refers to the area created by the division of a constituency, ward, or division into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors. The term 'Polling Place' refers to the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer. The term 'Polling Station' refers to the room or building where the poll takes place for each election
- 5.2 In relation to using schools as polling places, the rules that govern the conduct of elections (Representation of the People Act 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22) give the Returning Officer a statutory right to use, free of charge, schools maintained or assisted by a Council as well as those schools that receive grants made out of moneys provided by Parliament. This includes academies and free schools. Currently, forty-five of the one hundred and three designated polling places are schools. Therefore, schools must comply with any request for use of a school or part thereof for the purpose of a polling station.
- 5.3 Planned elections do not have an impact on the 190 statutory days of education (189 days for –2022) as the 28 schools that do not open to pupils set a planned INSET day. Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999.
- 5.4 In the exception of an unexpected school closure due to unscheduled elections, a school can mitigate by a move to online virtual learning where an INSET day has not been planned.
- 5.5 Polling stations must be accessible to all. The Returning Officer has a duty, under Section 20 (4) of the Equality Act 2010 to make adjustments where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage. Under Section 29 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 -The provision of a service to the public or a section of the public (for payment or not) must not discriminate against a person requiring the service by not providing the person with the service.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

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

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 If a certain school or room is deemed to be the most suitable venue by the Returning Officer, then the school cannot refuse to allow it to be used. The benefit to the Returning Officer of designating a school (or part thereof) as a polling station ensures that the venue can be used, free of charge, for scheduled and unscheduled elections. All schools have appropriate disabled access. Schools can allocate an INSET day if they choose to close on polling day. Unscheduled elections, for schools that close, may cause disruption to staff, parents, and pupils.
- 7.2 There are several risks associated with moving from schools to private venues. Private venues have no legal responsibility for allowing electoral services to require the use of the venue for scheduled or unscheduled elections. Private venues can refuse the use of the room without explanation. Any access requirements that electoral services identify must be paid for by the Council. Buildings can be sold, renovated, or demolished without any prior notice being given to electoral services. The general upkeep and suitability of the building is only checked once a year by the elections team. Private venues dictate the hire charge and can increase the charge as they see fit.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Schools are not used as polling stations in the Hoylake & Meols, Liscard, or Moreton West & Saughall Massie wards. The ward Councillors representing these wards have not been consulted on the proposals within this report.
- 8.2 All ward councillors for the remaining 19 wards have been consulted by email and asked for comments, their comments are summarised within this report along with an officer response.
- 8.3 The Director, and the Assistant Director of Education have been consulted. They fully support the recommendations of this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has an ongoing responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (S149) to take equality implications into consideration in policy decision, implementation, and day to day activities. The impact on those with protected characteristics under the Act were taken into consideration during this exercise when assessing the overall suitability of a venue. Any changes to venues and or arrangements will be assessed with equality impacts in mind and other voting practices such as proxy and postal voting remains in place for those who wish to use it.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no significant environmental or climate implications arising from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The use of privately owned venues benefits local businesses financially, but it also promotes and enhances the social network in the local area. Furthermore, it redirects wealth back into the local community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Summary findings doc

Appendix 2 – Cost implications (contains exempt financial information) Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972- Access to Information: Exempt information

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Representation of the People Act 1983

Equality Act 2010

The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006.

Education Act 1996

Polling Place visit reports

The Government’s approach to elections and referendums during COVID-19: additional information for electoral administrators, candidates, campaigners and voters”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|---|-------------------------|
| Regulatory and General Purposes Committee | 20 January 2022 |
| Licensing Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee | 23 January 2019 |
| Licensing Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee | 20 November 2019 |

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Appendix 1 – Summary Findings

| Proposed Polling Stations to be moved from schools | | | | |
|--|------------------|--|---|--|
| Ward | Polling District | School | Alternative Venue | Recommendation |
| Bidston & St James | AB | Bidston Village C of E Primary School Ballantyne Drive, Bidston, Wirral, CH43 7XG | St. Oswald Parish Church | Suitable alternative venue. All ward Councillors support. Recommend St Oswald's as most suitable venue for polling district AB. |
| Bromborough | HB | Church Drive Primary School, Church Drive, Port Sunlight, CH62 5EF | Hulme Hall | Suitable alternative venue. One ward Councillor supports. No comments received from other ward Councillors. Recommend Hulme Hall as polling place for HB. |
| Clatterbridge | KC | Brookhurst Primary School Brookhurst Road, Clatterbridge, Wirral, CH63 0EH | Chapel of Saint Peters Brookhurst Close. | Suitable alternative venue. Two ward Councillor's support. Recommend Chapel of Saint Peter as polling place for KC. |

| | | | | |
|----------|----|---|---|--|
| Greasby | PD | Irby Primary School, Coombe Road, Irby, CH61 4UR | St Chads Church Hall | Suitable alternative venue. All ward Councillors support. Recommend St Chad's as polling place for PD. |
| Seacombe | SA | Riverside Primary School Brighton Street, Seacombe, Wirral, CH44 6QW | Royal Naval Association (RNA) | Suitable alternative. One ward Councillor supports the recommendation. No comments received from other ward Councillors. Recommend RNA as polling place for SA. |
| Seacombe | SC | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Wheatland Lane, Seacombe, Wirral, CH44 7ED | St Joseph's Parish Centre. Wheatland Lane. | Suitable alternative. One ward Councillor supports the recommendation. No comments received from other ward Councillors. Recommend St Joseph's parish centre as polling place for SC |
| Wallasey | VE | Greenleas Primary School Green Lane, Wallasey, | St Nicholas Church | The school is a superior venue to the church however, the church is suitable as a polling place. |

| | | Wirral, CH45 8LZ | Harrison Hall | <p>Ward Councillors support.</p> <p>Suitable alternative but it is in polling district VC.</p> <p>Ward Councillor comments: Access, by car, to Harrison Hall for residents in polling district VE, is complicated by the one way system in the vicinity of Harrison Hall (Groveland Road), which would require residents to take alternative, longer trips. St Nicholas Church is an easier location to reach</p> <p>Recommend St Nicholas Church as polling place for VE. Ward Councillors support.</p> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| Polling Stations to remain in schools | | | | |
| Ward | Polling District | School | Alternative Venue | Recommendation |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|---|-----------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| Birkenhead & Tranmere | BF | Mersey Park Primary School Elm Road, Tranmere, Wirral, CH42 0PH | Beehive Public House | <p>No separate entrance/exit to pub. Pub would remain open during poll so unsuitable as a venue.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors emailed 15.12.2021. I have not received any comments from ward councillors.</p> |
| Cloughton | CA | St Peter's Catholic Primary School St Peters Way, Cloughton, Wirral, CH43 9QR | Church Hall, St Peters Way | <p>Very small car park that is shared with the school. No elector or disabled parking if school remains open to pupils. No on-site toilet facilities for staff.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors support my recommendation.</p> |
| Cloughton | CC | Bidston Avenue Primary School, Bidston Avenue, Cloughton, CH41 0DQ | St Beads, Cloughton Village | <p>The church is situated on a busy main road. There is very limited timed street parking, and no venue carpark. There is no dropped kerb to the venue, and no disabled</p> |

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| | | | | <p>parking. Poor disabled access.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors support my recommendation.</p> |
| Oxton | DB | Oxton St Saviours C of E Primary School Holm Lane, Oxton, Wirral, CH43 2HT | Old Parkonians Rugby Club | <p>Pedestrian access is poor. Venue has a very long uneven and steep path. There is no handrail along the path, and no external lighting. Works are being carried out February 2022.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors have been consulted by email on 17.12.2021. I have not received any comments from ward councillors</p> |
| Oxton | DC | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Fairview Road, Oxton, Wirral, CH43 5UT | St Joseph's Parish Centre, Greenbank Road. | The venue is outside of polling district (LD) and in the Prenton ward. |

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| | | | Tixall Bowling Club | <p>This venue has a very steep pedestrian access, and the area is poorly lit at night.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors have been consulted by email on 17.12.2021. I have not received any comments from ward councillors.</p> |
| Rock Ferry | EA | Bedford Drive Primary School Bedford Drive, Rock Ferry, Wirral, CH42 6RT | HealthWorks Occupational Health Building | <p>The car park is quite far from the venue and the road outside is very busy. Internally all available rooms are too small and there is no separate access for electors and patients.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Two ward Councillors support my recommendation.</p> |
| Pensby & Thingwall | FA | Thingwall Primary School Pensby Road, Thingwall, | Warren Medical Centre | <p>The car park is extremely busy. Parking for electors and polling staff could not be guaranteed. The venue</p> |

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| | | Wirral, CH61 7UG | | <p>would remain open to patients attending medical centre. Internally, the rooms are not big enough to accommodate a polling station. It would not be possible to display election notices clearly.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors have been consulted by email on 17.12.2021.</p> <p>I have not received any comments from ward councillors.</p> |
| Bebington | GC | St Andrews C of E Primary School Townfield Lane, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 7NL | No potential alternatives identified within polling district | <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place.</p> <p>One ward supports the recommendation. I have not received any comments from two ward Councillors</p> |

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| | GD | Brackenwood Junior School Norbury Avenue, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 2HH | United Reform Church Higher Bebington Road | <p>The church did not wish to hire the venue as a polling station.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place.</p> <p>Ward Councillors have been consulted by email on 17.12.2021. One ward Councillor supports the recommendation. I have not received any comments from two ward Councillors.</p> |
| Eastham | JC | Heygarth Primary School Heygarth Road, Eastham, Wirral, CH62 8AG | Argyle Public House, Plymyard Avenue CH62 8EH | <p>Unsuitable alternative. There is no separate entrance for the function room. The pub would remain open during 11am – 10pm. The disabled access is poor.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place.</p> |

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| | | | | One ward Councillor has expressed disappointment that no suitable alternative could be identified. Two ward Councillors have not commented. |
| Prenton | LB | Prenton Primary School Bramwell Avenue, Prenton, Wirral, CH43 0RQ | Saddle Club - Roman Road | Internally the venue floor is uneven. Parking space is limited. The venue is located on a busy dangerous road on a bend. The owner was unable to guarantee availability for scheduled or unscheduled elections. Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors have been consulted by email on 17.12.2021. Ward Councillors have not submitted any comments. |
| | LD | Devonshire Park Primary School Temple Road, Prenton, Wirral, CH42 9JX | No suitable alternatives within the polling district. | Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors have been consulted by email on 17.12.2021. Ward Councillors have not submitted any comments. |

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| | | | Ganney Meadow Nursery | <p>the building attached to Fender Primary School. The nursery is not interested in hiring the venue to elections.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors support the recommendation.</p> |
| Greasby | PA | Greasby Infant School Hall Drive, Greasby, Wirral, CH49 3NX | No suitable alternatives within polling district. | Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors support the recommendation. |
| West Kirby & Thurstaston | QD | Dawpool C of E Primary School, School Lane, Thurstaston, Wirral, CH61 0HH | No suitable alternatives within polling district. | Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. One ward Councillor supports the recommendation. No comments received two ward Councillors |
| Heswall | RA | Barnston Primary | Heswall Spaces | Unable to make contact to |

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| | | School Sandham Grove, Heswall, Wirral, CH60 1XW | | <p>confirm appointment for site visit.</p> <p>Emailed and called several times.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place.</p> <p>Ward Councillors emailed 21.12.2021. Ward Councillors have not submitted any comments.</p> |
| | RB | Gayton Primary School Gayton Road, Heswall, Wirral, CH60 8PZ | Heswall Golf Club - | <p>Unable to make contact to confirm appointment for site visit. Emailed and called several times.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place.</p> <p>Ward Councillors emailed 21.12.2021. Ward Councillors have not submitted any comments.</p> |

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| | SB | Somerville Primary School Northbrook Road, Seacombe, Wirral, CH44 9AR | Young Peoples Home Poulton Road. | Unable to make contact to conduct site visit. Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. One ward Councillor supports the recommendation. No comments received from two ward Councillors |
| Leasowe & Moreton East | TC | Eastway Family Centre (within Eastway Primary) Eastway, Moreton, Wirral CH46 | No suitable alternatives within polling district. | Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place. Ward Councillors informed by email 21.12.2021. Ward Councillors have not submitted any comments. |
| New Brighton | UA | SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School Atherton Street, New Brighton, Wirral, CH45 9JD | St Peter & Pauls Church. | St Peter & Pauls Church will not act as a polling place as they have daily worship. There are no other suitable venues in polling district. Recommend that the school |

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| | | | | remains as most suitable polling place. One ward Councillor supports recommendation. No comments received from two ward Councillors |
| | UD | Liscard Primary School Withens Lane, Wallasey, Wirral, CH45 7NQ | Saddle Inn Withens Lane | <p>Unsuitable venue. The function room has a separate entrance from car park but also has a door to / from the main pub which would stay open during the poll.</p> <p>Recommend that the school remains as the most suitable polling place.</p> <p>One ward Councillor supports recommendation. No comments received from two ward Councillors</p> |



CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MONDAY 31 JANUARY 2022

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|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| REPORT TITLE: | 2022/23 BUDGET UPDATE |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE |

REPORT SUMMARY

The report provides for consideration of the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update. The associated Report of the Director of Resources to the Policy and Resources Committee is attached at appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note and comment on the 2022/23 draft budget proposals.
- 2) authorise the relevant director with portfolio to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Children Young People and Education Committee as the Director considers appropriate.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Policy and Services Committees to provide feedback on the budget proposals for the Policy and Resources Committee to take into consideration in recommending a legal budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other options have been considered as reported in the Policy and Resources Committee and appended report.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on Monday, 17 January 2021 will receive a report from the Director of Resources providing an updated position on the draft budget for 2022/23 and related statutory consultation. That report and associated appendices are appended to this report.

- 3.2 The budget proposals associated to the Children Young People and Education Committee are detailed within section 3 of this report.

- 3.3 **PROPOSAL:** Reduction of Historic Teachers Pensions Costs

More about this option: The council is responsible for the costs of additional benefits awarded to teachers upon early retirement outside of the terms of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. This is a legacy financial commitment where the cost is reducing over time and can be achieved through a simple budget reduction.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Alternative Accommodation Provision for Children Looked After

More about this option: In order to reduce costs associated with external accommodation providers, the council plans to partner with a Community Interest Company to open four children's homes for up to 16 young people over the next 2 years.

Provision will include short-breaks, therapeutic provision for children and young people with learning disability/autism and mental health difficulties and expanding in-house provision at Willowtree for young people with disabilities. A registered housing provider will also be commissioned to offer care leaver accommodation.

Saving: £1m

PROPOSAL: Utilisation of Demand Reserve

More about this option: This proposal is focused on service demand. A long-term saving will involve an alternative delivery model based on the Department for Education's Family Safeguarding model. In the meantime, COVID funding will deliver the savings until the permanent model is in place.

Saving: £467k

PROPOSAL: Children's Services redesign and posts deletion/closure

More about this option: This proposal will look to achieve efficiencies within the Directorate through removal of vacant posts, redeployment, and service realignment.

Saving: £294k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in Adoption Orders.

More about this option: Wirral had a disproportionately high number of adoption orders in 2017/18 and 2018/19. This has impacted on the budget which funds the service via the Regional Adoption Agency. The funding formula for the regional adoption agency is currently based on the average number of adoption orders for the previous four years. As these adoption order numbers pass out of the formula calculation over the next two years, Wirral's contribution to the regional adoption agency will reduce.

Saving: 2022/23: £50k 2023/23 £150k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in the Number of Looked After Children

More about this option: In recent years, the overall children looked after (CLA) numbers in Wirral were higher than statistical neighbours. The numbers coming into care presently are more in line with neighbours. The cohort of children who joined during the earlier period are likely to remain in care until age 18, but as these pre-2019 children reach 18 we anticipate our CLA spending will reduce annually.

Saving: £564k (22/23)

PROPOSAL: Review of Youth Offending Service

More about this option: This proposal includes the removal of a post from the Youth Offending Service structure which is no longer required. Wirral's Youth Justice Service produces an Annual Strategic Plan which is approved by the Youth Justice Management Board and Council. The plan sets out the priorities and action for future delivery. It is anticipated that the service can continue to meet its statutory responsibilities and prevention approach without the additional post.

Saving: £25k

PROPOSAL: Special Educational Needs (SEND) Transport Review

More about this option: This option will include a service redesign which will look to reduce costs in home to school transport for children with SEND. The review will include changes to timings and routes, multiple drop offs, vehicle sharing and eligibility post 16.

Saving: £150k

PROPOSAL: Increase Funding for Placements from Health Clinical Commissioning Group and SEND

More about this option: Social Care currently contributes the majority of funding (90%) towards residential placements whilst education contribute 4.45% and health 5.27% (as of April 2021). This proposal is seeking a more equal distribution of funding which will help secure this saving.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Redesign of Youth Offer

More about this option: This proposal will seek to achieve savings through a review of current budgets and resource. It will include withdrawal of £150k from the Hive (in addition to the £200k withdrawn last year 2020/21), the removal of £108k from the Youth Service budget and deletion of one post from the Youth Service.

In 22/23 the Hive will continue to receive a £100k contribution from local developers.

Saving: £200k

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is to ensure that a fully balanced legal budget can be recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

1.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Dan Sharples**
(Dan Sharples, Democracy Business Manager)
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Committee, 17 January 2022
Appendix 2 Detailed Draft 2022-23 Budget Position
Appendix 3 Briefing Note: Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23
Appendix 4 2022/23 Budget Setting Proposals Pack
Appendix 5 Full Budget Consultation report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Pressure and Growth Business Cases
Savings and Income Business Cases
DLUHC External Assurance Reports

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Policy and Resources Committee | 17 March 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 25 October 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 01 December 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 17 January 2022 |

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Appendix 1



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Monday, 17 January 2022

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| REPORT TITLE: | 2022/23 BUDGET UPDATE |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES (S151 OFFICER) |

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is part of the Council's formal budget process, as set out in the constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2022/23.

The Policy and Resources Committee on 25 October 2021 agreed to ask for the views of residents, businesses, and all those with a stake in the future of Wirral, about what council services matter to them most to help develop the budget plan. This consultation ran from 2 to 28 November 2021 and the outcomes are provided in this report.

At the Committee on 25 October 2021, and in line with the external assurance review recommendations to provide sensitivity analysis, three potential budget scenarios were presented as to what the budget gap could be for 2022/23. The rationale for the three scenarios was to present assumptions based on known information at the time in advance of the draft Local Government Finance Settlement being published and in advance of the compilation of proposals for pressures and growth items and savings and income for the 2022/23 budget.

The Draft Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 16 December 2021 and budget proposals have been developed in response to the previously outlined budget gap.

This report provides an updated position on the draft budget for 2022/23 and related statutory consultation. The final budget proposals will be presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 15 February 22 for recommendation to full Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Note the outcome of the draft Local Government Financial Settlement for 2022/23, in advance of the final Settlement which is due later in January 2022;
- (ii) Recognise, the extent of the Council's financial challenge and structural deficit, which needs to be eliminated;

(iii) Note the savings and income proposals that could address the 2022/23 budget gap;

(iv) Note the outcome of the November 2021 consultation;

(v) Consult on the draft budget for 2022-23, under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The scale of the financial challenge that the Council faces cannot be overstated. The Council has a structural deficit and this has been recognised in a request to DLUHC for the application of a capitalisation directive. The short-term support afforded by government in the form of a capitalisation directive does not extend beyond 2021/22, emphasising the need for focus and agility in balancing the Council's financial position.
- 1.2 The offer for capitalisation for the current financial year was subject to an external assurance review. The review focussed on the Council's financial position and on its ability, including the strength of its governance arrangements, to deliver its plans for medium-term sustainability. This process reinforces the requirement for an in-depth review of functions to enable considered and robust proposals to be made to Council in February 2022 for the 2022/23 budget.
- 1.3 Implementing proposals will require difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced budget can be presented. Regular Member engagement on the process is essential for effective budget formulation.
- 1.4 One component of the external assurance review recommendations set out the need to develop a financial recovery plan. Policy & Resources Committee approved the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at its meeting of 1 December 2021, which confirmed key principles the Council would follow in respect of its financial planning. The MTFS provides a robust, consistent, and sustainable approach to establishing and maintaining a stable and prudent financial basis on which the Council's services are to be delivered.
- 1.5 In order to fulfil the aims of the MTFS, it is imperative that proposals for budget options are evidence based and achievable. In order to ensure that this is the case, rigorous review has been undertaken through:
 - Directorate Management Teams (DMT)
 - Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - internal finance assurance review
 - external review via the engagement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and
 - Council Committees
- 1.6 This process of review and challenge is ongoing, to ensure that final proposals made to Policy & Resources Committee in February, for budget recommendation, are fully scrutinised and fit and proper in terms of readiness for decision-making. Contained within this report are all current proposals for consideration prior to the need to make decisions on how the budget for 2022/23 should be formulated.
- 1.7 Setting out potential budget proposals in this report ensures statutory consultation can be carried out in advance of setting the 2022/23 annual budget.

- 1.8 The information in this report also provides the opportunity for the Policy and Services Committees at their meetings in January 2022 to provide feedback on the budget proposals for the Policy and Resources Committee to take into consideration in recommending a legal budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.
- 1.9 As part of the budget setting process, the Policy and Resources Committee is able to take into consideration the outcome of the November 2021 consultation with residents, businesses, and all those with a stake in the future of Wirral, about what council services matter to them most to help develop the budget plan.
- 1.10 This report ensures that the Policy and Resources Committee is provided with timely information on the latest budget position and the matters that affect the budget gap inclusive of outline proposals to address it.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The setting of a legal budget is a statutory requirement and therefore no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 25 October three scenarios were presented as the potential budget gap for 2022/23. Members will be aware that the budget gap is an ever-moving target due to a number of factors:
- Ongoing Government announcements of funding, including specifically at this time of year, the Chancellor's Autumn Statement
 - The continued scrutiny of growth and pressures to ensure values are evidenced based with no optimism bias
 - Addition of new pressures that continue to materialise as further local and national evidence comes to light
 - The continued further development of budget proposals
- 3.2 As a result, the budget scenarios presented in October have changed and with the publication of the draft Local Government Financial Settlement on 16 December 2021, the three scenarios have been consolidated into one, more robust, position. This position however is subject to further change ahead of formal budget setting activity.

2022/23 Budget Position

3.3 The 2022/23 budget position is currently as follows:

| | Budget Position Reported in MTFS 1 Dec 21 | Revised Budget Position | Change |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| | £m | £m | £m |
| Total Funding | -317.94 | -330.57 | -12.63 |
| Initial Budget Requirement for 2022-23 | 329.40 | 329.40 | 0.00 |
| Total one off savings from 2021-22 | 7.51 | 7.51 | 0.00 |
| Total one off pressures from 2021-22 | -14.06 | -14.06 | 0.00 |
| Total known pressures | 31.64 | 27.45 | -4.19 |
| Initial Budget Gap | 36.55 | 19.73 | -16.81 |
| Total savings options | -11.34 | -20.31 | -8.97 |
| Revised Budget Gap | 25.21 | -0.58 | -25.79 |

3.4 A more detailed analysis of this table can be found in Appendix 1.

3.5 In October 2021, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced information regarding the Spending Review in his Autumn Statement. The details of this have been provided in the Local Government Funding Settlement, received on 16 December 2021 and a summary briefing note is included in Appendix 2. It should be noted that the settlement is provisional at this stage and is open to consultation until the 13th January 2022. Following the closure of the consultation period the settlement is subject to Parliamentary approval, and as such the financial position outlined above is subject to change.

3.6 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 1 December, agreement was given to identify further budget proposals via a process of providing Directorate budget envelopes, after the original budget process, agreed in March 2021, failed to generate the level of savings required.

3.7 In November 2021, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the two external assurance reports indicating areas the Council should give specific focus to. In response to the recommendations made in the assurance reports a peer-based improvement panel will convene in January when the information provided as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process will be reviewed.

3.8 The current set of budget proposals for the 2022/23 budget are included in Appendix 3.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is part of a programme of activity to ensure that a fully balanced, legal budget can be recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.

4.2 The programme to develop a robust budget position, which this paper forms part of, will support the Council in ensuring that CIPFA's Financial Management Code (FM Code) is complied with, in particular in relation to Section 4 of the FM Code – The Annual Budget.

4.3 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes they have in place satisfy the principles of good financial management, based on the following six principles:

- Organisational Leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisation culture.
- Accountability – based on Medium-Term Financial Planning, that derives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
- Financial management - undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer actions and elected member decision making.
- Professional standards - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
- Assurance - sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection.
- Sustainability - The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

4.4 Delivering financial sustainability is vitally important for the Council. The Capitalisation directive requirements reinforce the need to develop a revised approach to sustainable service delivery resource planning. This is reflective of comments made by Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditor, who noted as part of their value for money review during the audit of the 2019/20 accounts, "We note that the capitalisation directive will only provide support to the Council for 2020/21 and 2021/22. As such, the Council needs to ensure that it delivers against its revised MTFS. It will need to put in place clear plans to reduce its future recurring service expenditure and move to a balanced revenue position that does not rely on reserves".

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a

statutory responsibility of the Council and, therefore, of this Committee in preparing that budget.

- 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. In doing so, 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. Accordingly, proposals put forward as part of the budget process will have identified the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce the desired outcomes.
- 5.3 Consultation has taken place in respect of the priorities and views of the public in formulating the draft budget, as set out in this report.
- 5.4 Once the Committee has agreed a draft budget, which is the purpose of this report, there is then a requirement under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to conduct specific consultation with persons or bodies appearing to it to be representative of non-domestic ratepayers about the authority's proposals for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in the forthcoming financial year. The information required to be shared as part of the consultation is set out in the Non-Domestic Ratepayers (Consultation) Regulations 1992. This includes the authority's current estimates of the total of its revenue expenditure and the total of its expenditure for capital purposes for the forthcoming financial year (the draft budget).
- 5.5 It must be borne in mind that this is consultation on the budget proposals, not on the decision to take whatever decision is implied by the adoption of that budget.
- 5.6 The report sets out the relevant considerations for Members to consider during their deliberations and Members are reminded of the need to ignore irrelevant considerations. Members have a duty to seek to ensure that the Council acts lawfully and, where a service is provided pursuant to a statutory duty, it would not be lawful to fail to discharge it properly or abandon it, and where there is discretion as to how it is to be discharged, that discretion should be exercised reasonably. Members must not come to a decision which no reasonable authority could come to; balancing the nature, quality and level of services which they consider should be provided, against the costs of providing such services.
- 5.7 There is a particular requirement to take into consideration the Council's fiduciary duty and the public sector equality duty in coming to a decision.
- 5.8 Members are also individually reminded that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to the Council meeting on the budget and therefore arguably to the formulation of the Budget. Members who are two months or more in arrears with their Council Tax must declare this to the meeting and must not vote on budget recommendations, as to do otherwise can be a criminal offence.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The implications for staffing, ICT and Assets will be included within the individual savings proposals currently being developed by Directors and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position in year. Examples of which are new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, ongoing impact of the pandemic, etc.
- 7.2 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.
- 7.3 Failure to achieve a balanced budget would lead to the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice and potential ministerial intervention under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.
- 7.4 Funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP) is regularly reviewed and updated as part of routine financial management.
- 7.5 Under the system of retained Business Rates, Authorities benefit from a share of any increased revenues but are liable for at least a share of any falls in income (subject to safety net triggers) and any non-collection. This includes reductions arising from appeals relating to past years which partially fall on the Authority. These risks are mitigated through a combination of the operation of the Collection Fund, General Fund Balances and a Business Rates Equalisation Reserve.
- 7.6 A balanced MTFP is fundamental in demonstrating robust and secure financial management. Delivering a balanced position requires continual review and revision of plans to allow alternative financial proposals to be developed and embedded in plans as situations change. A delay in agreeing these may put the timetable for setting the 2022/23 budget at risk and may result in a balanced budget not being identified in time for the deadline of 11 March 2022.
- 7.7 Assumptions have been made in the current budget outlook for income and funding from business rates and council tax and social care grants as the main sources of funding. If there is an adverse change to these assumptions as a result of the final funding settlement, additional savings proposals or reduced expenditure would need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a balanced five-year MTFP.
- 7.8 Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly

monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/ CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Initial consultation has taken place to ask for the views of residents, businesses, and all those with a stake in the future of Wirral, about what council services and priorities matter to them most to help develop the 2022-23 budget. This process ran from 2 to 28 November 2021. The full report of the outcome to the consultation is included within Appendix 4.
- 8.2 Statutory budget consultation will commence subject to agreement by the Committee. This will take place in January 2022 and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.
- 8.3 All Policy and Services Committees will have an opportunity to debate the draft 2022/23 budget publicly at the January 2022 Committees and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.
- 8.4 The Council has engaged regularly with trade unions about the Council's financial position and response to the external assurance reports. This will continue throughout the budget setting process.
- 8.5 For budget proposals that may result in reductions to the workforce, the Council will consult with trade unions and relevant staff groups as required and in accordance with section 188(1A) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (TULRCA) 1992.
- 8.6 The Council is committed to mitigating the impact on staff as far as possible and will take all steps possible to avoid any compulsory redundancies in accordance with policies and procedures.

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 The equality implications will be included within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval. Equality implications will be part of the decision-making process.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The environment and climate implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The community wealth implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed. The budget proposals under consideration will take account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- Progressive Procurement and Social Value How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- More local & community ownership of the economy Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses. Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses. Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- Decent and Fair Employment Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- Making wealth work for local places

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Detailed Draft 2022-23 Budget Position

Appendix 2: Briefing Note: Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23

Appendix 3: 2022/23 Budget Setting Proposals Pack

Appendix 4: Full Budget Consultation report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Pressure and Growth Business Cases

Savings and Income Business Cases

DLUHC External Assurance Reports

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Policy and Resources Committee | 17 March 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 25 October 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 30 November 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 01 December 2021 |

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APPENDIX 2: Detailed Draft 2022-23 Budget Position

| | Budget Position Reported in MTFS 1 Dec 21 £m | Revised Budget Position £m | Change £m |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| FUNDING | | | |
| Business Rates | | | |
| Business Rates base | -72.30 | -72.30 | 0.00 |
| Inflation | -1.16 | -1.16 | 0.00 |
| Properties | -0.14 | -0.14 | 0.00 |
| Section 31 Grant | -11.67 | -11.67 | 0.00 |
| Top up Grant | -34.30 | -35.05 | -0.75 |
| BCF | -18.80 | -19.24 | -0.44 |
| Council Tax | | | |
| Council Tax Base | -156.70 | -156.70 | 0.00 |
| Additional Properties | -0.57 | -0.57 | 0.00 |
| Inflation | -3.15 | -3.15 | 0.00 |
| Adult Social Care Precept | -1.58 | -1.58 | 0.00 |
| Other | | | |
| Collection Fund (surplus) / deficit | 4.04 | 4.04 | 0.00 |
| Local Council Tax Support Grant | -2.56 | -2.56 | 0.00 |
| NI reimbursement Grant | -1.44 | 0.00 | 1.44 |
| New Homes Bonus | -0.07 | -0.44 | -0.37 |
| Social Care Grant | -14.60 | -19.77 | -5.17 |
| Lower Tier Funding | 0.00 | -0.51 | -0.51 |
| Capital Receipts | -2.93 | -2.93 | 0.00 |
| Capitalisation Directive | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2022/23 Services Grant | 0.00 | -5.62 | -5.62 |
| Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund | 0.00 | -1.22 | -1.22 |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---------------|
| TOTAL FUNDING | -317.94 | -330.57 | -12.63 |
| | Budget Position Reported in MTFS 1 Dec 21 | Revised Budget Position | Change |
| | £m | £m | £m |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| INITIAL BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR 2022/23 | 329.40 | 329.40 | 0.00 |
| Removal of one-off items from 21/22: | | | |
| Total one off savings from 21/22 | 7.51 | 7.51 | 0.00 |
| Total one off pressures from 21/22 | -14.06 | -14.06 | 0.00 |
| REVISED BUDGET GAP | 4.91 | -7.72 | -12.63 |
| ADD KNOWN PRESSURES/ GROWTH | 31.64 | 27.45 | -4.19 |
| REVISED BUDGET GAP | 36.55 | 19.73 | -16.81 |
| DEDUCT PROPOSED SAVINGS | | | |
| Adult Care & Health | -4.00 | -3.89 | 0.11 |
| Children, Young People & Education | -1.89 | -3.15 | -1.27 |
| Neighbourhoods | -0.77 | -6.28 | -5.51 |
| Regeneration & Place | -0.08 | -1.93 | -1.85 |
| Resources | -1.10 | -4.23 | -3.13 |
| Law & Governance | -0.20 | -0.73 | -0.53 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Corporate | -3.31 | -0.11 | 3.20 |
| Total Proposed Savings | -11.34 | -20.31 | -8.97 |
| REVISED BUDGET GAP | 25.21 | -0.58 | -25.79 |

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APPENDIX 3: Briefing Note: Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This briefing note outlines the government's announcement and subsequent publications on 16th December 2021 concerning the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23 and gives an analysis on the impact on Wirral Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), although as noted below all data is provisional at this stage.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 27th October 2021 the government announced The Spending Review, which set out the Government's spending plans for each government department for the next three financial years, including local government and its agenda on "levelling up".

Following this, on 16th December 2021 the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23 was announced, with impacts on Core Spending Power for 2022/23, Social Care Grant allocations as well as other grant details. The settlement was for a single year only, to give the government time to work with the sector and assess how it will share out resources fairly in future years.

At the same time, a consultation related to the settlement proposals was launched, which runs for 4 weeks and concludes on 13th January 2023.

3.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEADLINES

3.1 Core Spending Power

Core Spending Power is a measure of the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery. It sets out the money that has been made available to local authorities (assuming full Council Tax increase) through the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The headline announcement was that an additional £3.5 billion of funding would be "made available" to councils, representing a 4% real terms increase. This includes an additional £1.5 billion of the £1.6 billion announced grant funding and the first of the promised support from Department of Health to support Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care.

It was again undertaken that no Council would suffer a cash terms cut in core spending power. The main sources of the funding are:

| ENGLAND | 2021-22 | Provisional 2022-23 | Change 22-23 | Change 22-23 |
|--|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | £ million | £ million | £ million | % |
| Settlement Funding Assessment | 14,809.7 | 14,882.2 | 72.5 | { |
| Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier | 650.0 | 1,025.1 | 375.1 | { 2.9 |
| Council Tax Requirement excluding parish precepts | 30,326.9 | 31,728.5 | 1,401.6 | 4.6 |
| Improved Better Care Fund | 2,077.0 | 2,139.8 | 62.8 | 3.0 |
| New Homes Bonus | 622.3 | 554.5 | -67.8 | -10.9 |
| Rural Services Delivery Grant | 85.0 | 85.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Social Care Grant ² | 1,710.0 | 2,346.4 | 636.4 | 37.2 |
| 2022/23 Services Grant | 0 | 822.0 | 822.0 | 0 |
| Market sustainability and Fair Cost of Care | 0 | 162.0 | 162.0 | 0 |
| Lower Tiers Services Grant | 111.0 | 111.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Core Spending Power | 50,391.9 | 53,856.5 | 3,464.6 | 6.9 |

3.2 Council Tax

The Council Tax proposals set out in the Spending Review 2021 in October were confirmed as part of the settlement. The proposal for core Council Tax in 2022/23 is therefore to continue a referendum cap of up to 2%.

There is also the flexibility to add up to a further 1% adult social care precept for authorities providing adult social care services. This can be enhanced by up to 3% of the permitted Social Care Precept increase from 2021-22 where not already utilised.

A £5 flexibility is proposed for district councils, a £10 flexibility is proposed for Police and Crime Commissioners and a flexibility of £5 for the 8 lowest charging fire and rescue authorities. No referendum limit is proposed for Mayoral Combined Authorities in 2022-23 and Government has deferred its decision to impose a referendum limit on Town and Parish Councils.

3.3 Improved Better Care Fund

Improved Better Care fund grows by 3% for all upper tier councils.

3.4 Social Care Grant

Social Care Grant will increase by £636m from £1,710m to £2,364m in 2022/23. The basis for allocating the additional £636m is as follows:

- £556 million is based on existing formula i.e., distributed using the adult social care relative needs formula.
- £80 million is to equalise the different abilities of councils to raise social care precept.

3.5 Lower Tier Services Grant

Introduced in 2021/22, the Lower Tier Services Grant was assumed to be one-off funding for the current financial year only. However, it has been retained for

2022/23 and remains unchanged in cash terms at £111m, although the distribution to Local Authorities has been recalculated.

3.6 New Homes Bonus

The government has decided to maintain the current approach to the NHB payments in 2022/23. There will be no legacy (i.e., second) payment for 2021-22 years' NHB meaning 2022-23 payment therefore consists of 2019-20 legacy and 2022-23 estimate, resulting in a 10.9% reduction in the overall grant.

3.7 2022/23 Services Grant

A new 2022/23 Services Grant was announced giving Local Authorities £822m nationally. This grant is explicitly noted as a one-off grant and will in future likely contribute towards transition funding in the future as the government intended to take steps towards the introduction of Fair Funding in later years.

3.8 Public Health Grant

Information on the Public Health grant is not yet available and is expected in the new year.

3.8 Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund

To further support the government's proposals for making specific funding available for social care services, along with Better Care Fund and Social Care Grant, the Department for Health and Social Care's Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund is included within Core Spending Power in 2022/23.

Totalling £162m nationally, this fund is to support Local Authorities prepare their markets for reform and move towards paying providers a fair cost of care and is to be allocated using the government's existing Adult Social Care Relative Need Formula, in line with the Social Care Grant.

4.0 WIRRAL COUNCIL IMPACT

4.1 Council Tax

The confirmation of the 2% core referendum principal means an increase in Council Tax income of approximately £3.1m as reported as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at Policy & Resources Committee on 1st December 2021.

Similarly, a 1% Council Tax precept for Adult Social Care would generate an additional £1.6m as reported within the MTFS. Both these figures are subject to confirmation of the Council Tax Base figure for 2022/23, which is due to be reported to Policy and Resources in January 2022.

4.2 Social Care Grant

Provisional allocations of the ringfenced Social Care Grant indicate that Wirral will receive £19.8m in 2022/23, which is an increase of £5.2m compared with the 2021/22 budget and the 2022/23 assumption in the MTFS reported to Policy & Resources. Based upon this allocation, the resources have been proportioned across Adults and Children's Services to limit the requirement to make additional savings in those statutory services.

4.3 **Lower Tier Services Grant**

It had previously been assumed that the Lower Tier Services grant was for one year only in 2021/22. However, confirmation of its continuation in 2022/23 means a £0.5m improvement compared with MTFs assumptions.

4.4 **New Homes Bonus**

It had previously been assumed that the New Homes Bonus grant was coming to an end with just a legacy payment of £0.074m due in 2022/23. However, the government has decided to maintain the current approach to the NHB payments in 2022/23. Provisional allocations indicate Wirral will receive £0.4m in 2022/23, an increase of £0.36m against previous assumptions.

4.5 **2022/23 Services Grant**

Provisional allocations indicate Wirral will receive £5.6m from this new grant, which was not included in previous assumptions as a standalone grant. However, as well as providing funding to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services, including social care, delivered at every level of local government, this grant includes funding for local government costs for the increase in employer National Insurance Contributions which Wirral had previously assumed would be received as a separate grant of £1.4m, meaning the provisional allocation is £4.2m better off against previous assumptions.

4.6 **Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund**

Early indications are that Wirral will receive approximately £1.2m for this funding, although any detailed conditions and allocation tables are not expected until early in 2022. This has been allocated to Adult Social Services, pending additional guidance and implications.

4.7 **Business Rates**

The settlement confirmed that the 100% Business Rates Retention pilot that Wirral participates in alongside Liverpool City Region authorities will continue in 2022/23. Although this was already assumed in the MTFs, this is positive news as Wirral benefits by approximately £7m per year as a result of participating in the pilot.

The latest assumptions were that the Business Rates Top-up would remain unchanged from 2021/22 at £53.1m. However, the provisional settlement indicates this will increase to £54.3m, an improvement of £1.2m.

4.8 Included within this increase is a 3% BCF increase of £0.44m to support integrated working across Adults, Children's, Public Health and NHS.

4.9 **Dedicated Schools Grant**

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations were also published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 16th December 2021. Although this is ringfenced education funding and therefore has no impact on the MTFs, Wirral's indicative allocation for 2022/23 is £313.5m, a £10.9m (3.6%) increase from the current 2021/22 estimate.

- 4.10 In total, the provisional impact on the Wirral MTFS is an improvement of £12.6m. The following table summarises the impact of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on Wirral Council's MTFS:

| | 2021/22 Budget £m | 2022/23 | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | MTFS assumption (P&R 01/12/21) £m | Provisional settlement £m | MTFS Impact £m |
| Business Rates Top-Up | -53.10 | -53.10 | -54.29 | -1.19 |
| SC NI levy reimbursement | 0.00 | -1.44 | 0.00 | -1.44 |
| New Homes Bonus | -0.20 | -0.07 | -0.44 | -0.36 |
| Social Care Grant | -14.60 | -14.60 | -19.77 | -5.17 |
| Lower Tier Funding | -0.50 | 0.00 | -0.51 | -0.51 |
| 2022/23 Services Grant | 0.00 | 0.00 | -5.62 | -5.62 |
| Market Sustainability & Fair Cost of Care Fund | 0.00 | 0.00 | -1.22 | -1.22 |
| Total provisional 2022/23 MTFS impact | | | | -12.62 |

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 While the settlement brought positive news for Wirral as well as the Local Government sector in general, the data outlined in this briefing note should be treated with caution.
- 5.2 Firstly the settlement is provisional at this stage, and as noted is open to consultation until the 13th January 2022. Following the closure of the consultation period the settlement is subject to Parliament approve, and as such the data outlined above is subject to change.
- 5.3 Guidance on Business Rates for 2022/23 is still to be released. The estimated income generated from Business Rates for 2022/23, as well as the related Section 31 Grants for qualifying reliefs, will be analysed in detail in conjunction with the guidance when available. Such estimates have a deadline for completion and submission to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of 31st January 2022, and as such the impact of Business Rates income on the MTFS is not yet clear.
- 5.4 Similarly, the estimate of the Collection Fund position will impact the 2022/23 budget. This is a statutory process and is based on the latest data available on 15th January 2022 and therefore this will not be known until late January.
- 5.5 Finally, while the provisional settlement brings positive news for Wirral Council it is important to remember that, despite the three-year Spending Review period, the government have only impacted a single -year settlement. While the additional resources for 2022/23 are welcomed, they only provide limited and short-term stability while creating uncertainty for longer term financial planning.

2022/2023 BUDGET SETTING Proposals Pack



Children's Services

Wirral's Children's Services are focussed on breaking the cycle of poor outcomes and encouraging and enabling families to bring up children in safe, happy, and secure environments. Its functions include:

- Assessment and Intervention
- Children's Business Support
- Early Childhood Services
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Fostering, Adoption and Placement Commissioning
- Integrated Front Door
- Modernisation
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Performance Improvement
- Permanence
- Safeguarding QA and Practice Improvement
- SEND and Inclusion
- Schools Improvement
- Youth Service

PROPOSAL: Reduction of Historic Teachers Pensions Costs

More about this option: The council is responsible for the costs of additional benefits awarded to teachers upon early retirement outside of the terms of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. This is a legacy financial commitment where the cost is reducing over time and can be achieved through a simple budget reduction.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Alternative Accommodation Provision for Children Looked After

More about this option: In order to reduce costs associated with external accommodation providers, the council plans to partner with a Community Interest Company to open four children's homes for up to 16 young people over the next 2 years. Provision will include short-breaks, therapeutic provision for children and young people with learning disability/autism and mental health difficulties and expanding in-house provision at Willowtree for young people with disabilities. A registered housing provider will also be commissioned to offer care leaver accommodation.

Saving: £1m

PROPOSAL: Utilisation of Demand Reserve

More about this option: This proposal is focused on service demand. A long-term saving will involve an alternative delivery model based on the Department for Education's Family Safeguarding model. In the meantime, COVID funding will deliver the savings until the permanent model is in place.

Saving: £467k

PROPOSAL: Children's Services redesign and posts deletion/closure

More about this option: This proposal will look to achieve efficiencies within the Directorate through removal of vacant posts, redeployment, and service realignment.

Saving: £294k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in Adoption Orders.

More about this option: Wirral had a disproportionately high number of adoption orders in 2017/18 and 2018/19. This has impacted on the budget which funds the service via the Regional Adoption Agency. The funding formula for the regional adoption agency is currently based on the average number of adoption orders for the previous four years. As these adoption order numbers pass out of the formula calculation over the next two years, Wirral's contribution to the regional adoption agency will reduce.

Saving: 2022/23: £50k 2023/24: £150k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in the Number of Looked After Children

More about this option: In recent years, the overall children looked after (CLA) numbers in Wirral were higher than statistical neighbours. The numbers coming into care presently are more in line with neighbours. The cohort of children who joined during the earlier period are likely to remain in care until age 18, but as these pre-2019 children reach 18 we anticipate our CLA spending will reduce annually.

Saving: £564k (22/23)

PROPOSAL: Review of Youth Offending Service

More about this option: This proposal includes the removal of a post from the Youth Offending Service structure which is no longer required.

Wirral's Youth Justice Service produces an Annual Strategic Plan which is approved by the Youth Justice Management Board and Council. The plan sets out the priorities and action for future delivery. It is anticipated that the service can continue to meet its statutory responsibilities and prevention approach without the additional post.

Saving: £25k

PROPOSAL: Special Educational Needs (SEND) Transport Review

More about this option: This option will include a service redesign which will look to reduce costs in home to school transport for children with SEND. The review will include changes to timings and routes, multiple drop offs, vehicle sharing and eligibility post 16.

Saving: £150k

PROPOSAL: Increase Funding for Placements from Health Clinical Commissioning Group and SEND

More about this option: Social Care currently contributes the majority of funding (90%) towards residential placements whilst education contribute 4.45% and health 5.27% (as of April 2021). This proposal is seeking a more equal distribution of funding which will help secure this saving.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Redesign of Youth Offer

More about this option: This proposal will seek to achieve savings through a review of current budgets and resource. It will include withdrawal of £150k from the Hive (in addition to the £200k withdrawn last year 2020/21), the removal of £108k from the Youth Service budget and deletion of one post from the Youth Service.

In 22/23 the Hive will continue to receive a £100k contribution from local developers.

Saving: £200k

Regeneration

This Directorate is leading Wirral Council on its hugely ambitious regeneration of the borough, and plays a significant role in promoting housing supply, providing wider place-based regeneration and local growth, and supporting cohesive communities. Its functions include:

- Assets and Facilities Management
- Culture strategy and Visitor Economy
- Development Management and Building Control
- Housing, Supported housing and homelessness services
- Major Planning and projects including Wirral Growth Company
- Inward investment
- Regeneration
- Strategic Transport

PROPOSAL: Capitalisation of Regeneration Staff Salaries

More about this option: Capitalisation of salaries will ensure the delivery of the council's regeneration and economic growth programme, which is recognised as a once in a generation opportunity to address decline in Birkenhead and other areas across Wirral.

Saving: £1.4m

PROPOSAL: Cease Financial Contributions for the Provision of Community Alarms and Response Calls

More about this option: It is proposed the council will cease the grant funding contribution to current eligible customers for the community alarm/response services charges. Notice will be given to the providers of this funding being withdrawn in line with current funding regime and agreement notice period. Registered providers will then each undertake their own review of the service provided to see how this would be managed with their residents.

Saving: £200k (22-23) £100k (23/24)

PROPOSAL: Reconfiguration of Commissioned Homeless Accommodation

More about this option: The homeless accommodation scheme in its current configuration is not fully meeting the demands being seen coming through the council's housing options system. In partnership with service providers, we will look to reconfigure the service, adjusting parameters, including age restrictions, in order to meet demand and cater for wider client groups. Changes would result in the service having the ability to apply for intensive housing management eligible costs, thereby releasing the expenditure the council currently provides as part of a commissioned service.

Saving: £115k (22/23) £37k (23/24)

PROPOSAL: The Closure of Nine Public Conveniences

More about this option: Due to increasing maintenance costs, this proposal will see the closure of public conveniences, located mainly in coastal areas, with sites including Harrison Drive, New Brighton; Moreton Common; Moreton Cross; West Kirby Marine Lake; West Kirby Concourse (outside); Parade Gardens, Hoylake; Meols Parade; New Ferry and Thornton Hough.

Saving: £143k

PROPOSAL: Corporate Buildings – Holding Costs

More about this option: Following changes in working arrangements due to the Covid pandemic, a number of council owned buildings are currently not in use, and it is proposed that a further review of them is undertaken, with savings anticipated from reduced utility costs, cleaning, materials etc.

Saving: £50k

Law and Governance

The core business of this department is to provide corporate and operational legal advice, assistance and support to the authority and its members, as well as responsibility for the co-ordination and efficient management of the decision-making processes of the Council. Its functions include:

- Civic Services
- Committee Services
- Coroners
- Electoral
- Legal Services
- Licensing
- Registrars
- Scrutiny

PROPOSAL: Removal of Individual Member Budgets

More about this option: In order to set a balanced budget for the 2021/22 budget year, the council had agreed to limit the budget to £1,000 per member with a view to the budget being reintroduced for 2022/23. However, given the current budget savings requirement that the council must meet to set a balanced budget, it is proposed that this budget now be removed altogether.

Saving: £250k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in the Number of Committees

More about this option: The current re-design of the council's committee structure will be accompanied by a re-design of the staffing requirement to support the number of meetings, members, and officers in the decision-making process.

Saving: £150k

PROPOSAL: Capitalise Salaries

More about this option: This proposal will include a change to re-direct qualifying legal services salaries away from the council's central budget to specific capital projects, which will enable a saving on net revenue costs.

This type of expenditure is not considered to be a council overhead but a direct cost necessary to achieve a project or programme of projects.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Whole Council Elections

More about this option: the council is currently undertaking a statutory consultation on changing the electoral cycle to whole council elections as of 2023. Over a 4-year period, the cost of running Local Authority elections is £1,024,200. The costs of running whole council elections, with the provision of funding for the event of by-elections, would be £520,000 over the same 4-year period

Saving: £125k

Corporate Office

The role of the Corporate Office is to ensure that Wirral Council is a high-performing, well-managed, strategic organisation. The office stands as a key interface between the Chief executive, Senior Leadership Team, Leader of the Council, Members and Key Stakeholders.

Its functions include:

- Business Support
- Communications
- Customer Feedback and Members Enquires
- Quality and Organisational Effectiveness
- Strategy, Policy and Partnerships

PROPOSAL: Service Re-design

More about this option: The Corporate Office will be redesigned to include the centralisation of corporate resources and more integrated and flexible teams. This work will be delivered over 18 months. The first phase of this will be achieved through the deletion of two vacancies across the Policy and Communications Teams and a reduction in the marketing budget. Phase two will be developed during 2022/23 and will align with the Change Programme service re-design schedule to explore opportunities for centralised corporate services.

Saving: £110k

Adult Care and Health

The Department provides or secures the majority of care and support services through adult social care, which is part of the wider health and social care system. Its functions include:

- Care standards
- Commissioning Older People and Mental Health and Disability Services
- Public Health
- Strategic Commissioning
- Wirral Intelligence Service

PROPOSAL: Demand mitigation – Technology and Care Package Review

More about this option: This proposal is an increased efficiency requirement for 2022/23 against the community care budget based on a range of case reviews, demand management approaches and care provider market shaping.

Saving: £3.89m

Resources

The Resources department includes all the professional services needed for the efficient running and sound financial management of Wirral Council. Its functions include:

- Debt recovery and income
- Finance and Investment
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- ICT Strategy and Delivery
- Merseyside Pension Fund
- Organisational change
- Organisational Development and Design
- Procurement and Commercial Management
- Programme Office
- Revenues and Benefits and Council Tax

PROPOSAL: One Stop Shop Establishment Review

More about this option: The One Stop Shop (OSS) Network has reduced in line with a reduction in visitors to OSS outlets. Savings are achieved by the removal of vacant posts which are no longer required.

Saving: £99k

PROPOSAL: Review of Treasury Activity

More about this option: Debt management and investment opportunities cover a wide range of activities undertaken within Treasury Activity. This proposal will look at investment opportunities, including social and green investment aims. Additionally, there is also potential for new revenue streams from alternative investments. Both will be balanced against risk and current income targets.

Saving: £500k

PROPOSAL: Revenues & Benefits Review and Restructure

More about this option: This proposal includes a full review to examine every aspect of the service and its processes, looking to streamline as much as possible and removing wasteful/bureaucratic tasks from the service. This process includes the expansion and introduction of new automated processes.

The savings will be realised by a mixture of removing vacant posts from the existing structure which can be released from the review, together with streamlining management structures and a limited offer of early voluntary retirement.

Saving: £750k

PROPOSAL: Reduction of Strategic Change Revenue Budget

More about this option: Partial funding of business change can be supported through flexible use of capital receipts for transformation, and this can therefore release revenue budget whilst enabling the service to deliver major business change to the council.

Saving: £650k

PROPOSAL: Restructure of Procurement and Commercial Teams

More about this option: Following an in-year staffing restructure that saw a central team of commercial officers restructured, this proposal seeks to remove the remaining budget for the team. Additional roles supporting income generation are in place within the relevant Directorates.

Saving: £230k

PROPOSAL: Review of Finance Team Structure

More about this option: This saving proposal, of reducing resources within the Finance function, is presented in recognition of the changes being put forward elsewhere in the council that will impact on the support services required.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Cease Business Rates Contribution

More about this option: It is proposed that the annual contribution to reserves to guard against successful appeals of business rates is halted.

Saving: £696k

PROPOSAL: Modernisation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Service

More about this option: In order to improve the councils digital offer, Microsoft are being engaged to support a Digital Transformation programme. As part of this programme the ICT services will be modernised which will see processes digitalised and automated. This will enable savings to be made across ICT.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Review of Business Support Unit

More about this option: With the move to working from home, less stationery is being purchased and there is less of a requirement to provide courier services. Savings will therefore be made within the Business Support Unit in lines with these changes in working patterns.

Saving: £20k

PROPOSAL: Review of Internal Audit – Income and Efficiencies

More about this option: In addition to staff efficiencies the department will increase the selling of services to third parties, which will include new customers that have already been secured.

Saving: £80k

PROPOSAL: Reduction of Learning & Development Budget

More about this option: This one-year temporary saving can be made as a result of the introduction of a new Learning Experience Platform, reduction in face-to-face delivery and optimising the apprenticeship levy. In addition to this the council have increased income which will be paid in 2022/23 tax year from the government apprenticeship start incentive payments which can be utilised to support learning and development.

Saving: £100k

PROPOSAL: Investment Statutory Override Pressure Removal

More about this option: Councils had been granted a time limited special exemption on the way they account for financial investments. If this exemption was not in place, this would present a pressure for the council of an estimated £1m.

This had previously been included as a pressure as the time limit was about to expire. However, the time period has now been extended meaning that the pressure can be removed from 2022/23.

Saving: £1m

Neighbourhoods

The Neighbourhood's department is made up of the everyday functions that are key to the wellbeing of local areas and local people. The department includes a wide and varied range of universal, front-line services, such as:

- Assisted Travel
- Climate change
- Community Safety
- Customer Services
- Emergency Planning
- Environmental Health
- Highways Design and Maintenance
- Highways, Traffic and Road Safety
- Leisure
- Libraries
- Street Scene
- Major events
- Network Management
- One stop shops
- Parks and Countryside
- Road Safety
- Trading Standards
- Traffic Management
- Waste and Environment

PROPOSAL: Review of Leisure Service

More about this option: This proposal includes a full-service review of the council's Leisure Services Division to consider all elements delivered and focus on removal of unnecessary cost and duplication, improved commissioning, and a lean target operating model.

It is likely that there will be staffing implications as a consequence of the review, the totality of which cannot be identified at the present time. Any reduction in staffing numbers would be attempted to be achieved through EVR/VS, redeployment and/or retraining.

Saving: £178k

PROPOSAL: Highways Operational Services - Income exploration

More about this option: This proposal will explore the commercial opportunities and internal promotion of the various services available through Highway Operational Services in order to create additional income generation. It will also seek to further expand other departmental work requests within the council from Assets, Education, Parks & Countryside,

and third party works currently undertaken for service partners such as NHS and Wirral Older People's Parliament.

Income: £30k

PROPOSAL: Closure of Europa Fun/Leisure Pool & Enhanced Gym Offer

More about this option: This proposal includes the closure of the Leisure Pool ('Fun' Pool) at Europa Pools (wave machine, swimming pool features, flumes, etc). The option does not include the closure of the centre nor competition swimming pool which would continue to remain open. The service would also seek to repurpose the Leisure Pool, using the space to create a larger indoor gym offer and therefore increased income.

Saving: £246k Plus £20k increased income from Gym offer

PROPOSAL: Increased Catering Across all Leisure Sites

More about this option: This saving proposal would see an increase in income generation at the Sail Loft site through maximisation of customer numbers and sales. Further income could be generated through expansion of the service at different sites across the borough.

Income: £60k

PROPOSAL: Outdoor Water Sports Offer at West Kirby Marine Lake

More about this option: This budget option is an income generation scheme that would utilise the Marine Lake for new outdoor activities. These activities have become popular during the pandemic as people have sought alternatives to indoor activities whilst restrictions were in place.

Additionally, there will be more opportunities for residents to become involved in new sports activities, as well as having the potential to attract additional customers at the Sail Loft site

Income: £15k

PROPOSAL: Catering Pod at Leasowe Leisure Centre for Football Traffic

More about this option: This proposal will look to establish an outdoor catering offer (catering pod) at Leasowe Leisure Centre. An extension of the council's expanded in-house catering offer, the unit will primarily serve the high footfall football league traffic during the months of September – May. There is also scope to expand operation by re-locating the unit during the remaining months of the year.

Income: £21k

PROPOSAL: Permanent Closure and Demolition of Woodchurch Leisure Centre

More about this option: This option is for the closure of Woodchurch Leisure Centre. Due to the condition of the site, its low usage levels comparable with other sites, the required level of investment and the subsidy it carries, is proposed that the centre is then demolished to make way for a growth in outdoor leisure provision. The site adjacent to the Leisure Centre will see the construction of a new 3G Artificial Grass playing pitch and accompanying pavilion during the 2022-23 financial year.

Saving: £402k

PROPOSAL: Temporary Closure and Remodelling of Bidston Tennis Centre

More about this option: The option would see the closure of the Tennis Centre (indoors) in Bidston for a 12-month period whilst a facility upgrade takes place at the site within the core of the building. It has been identified by an independent leisure consultant that the facility mix within the building does not complement local need or local demographic. Consequently, a redesigned centre will meet the needs of the local population and provide additional income. The new development would take out 3 indoor tennis courts and replace with extensive soft play and gymnastics offer. A second new 3G AstroTurf pitch would also be built within the outside grounds of the site in a funding partnership between the Football Foundation and the Council with further income potential.

Saving: £114k

PROPOSAL: Review of Golf Offer

More about this option: This proposal will seek to generate savings through the closure of the two lowest income generating 18-hole golf courses, two leisure based recreational New Brighton sites and introduction of a new pricing/membership model for municipal golf. Brackenwood and Hoylake golf courses will close, along with Wallasey Beach and Kings Parade leisure sites. The two remaining golf courses will still provide a sufficient 'golf offer' to the residents of Wirral whilst substantially reducing the financial subsidy to the authority.

Saving: £328k

PROPOSAL: Exercise on Referral Programme

More about this option: Wirral's Leisure Services Team has a pool of qualified professionals who will be commissioned by health partners to provide patients with an opportunity to engage in a structured programme of physical activity or exercise by working with a qualified exercise professional to provide a positive introduction to being active.

Income: £100k

PROPOSAL: Reprovision of the Library Service

More about this option: This saving is associated with the development of a new operating model in libraries which will consolidate and realign the current libraries estate and resources to provide a comprehensive and efficient service for all who wish to use it. The new operating model will retain four central libraries and four community libraries, as well as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) only provision co-located in community assets. The home reader service will remain for residents who cannot access a traditional library, as will the council's digital library and online offer. In addition, the service will invest in a Mobile Library with a 3000-book capacity to ensure hard to reach communities have access to a library service. The saving will be achieved through library closures, service realignment and a staffing restructure.

Full details of the new Libraries Operating Model will be available from 10th January via: <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=956&MId=9051>

Saving: £814k

PROPOSAL: Floral Pavilion – New Operating Model

More about this option: This option would reduce the operational budget for the Floral Pavilion Theatre and Conference Centre, whilst increasing the amount of income generated by the venue. The venue does attract a subsidy however this has diminished in recent years due to improved management and this trend of working towards a leaner operating model with greater income potential is expected to continue.

Saving: £350k - £400k

PROPOSAL: Standardisation of Residents Parking Permits

More about this option: This proposal will look to standardise charges for residents parking permits for existing and new residents parking schemes to cover all operational running costs including the council's set-up, maintenance, administration, and enforcement costs for existing and new schemes.

Income: £110k

PROPOSAL: Fleet Efficiencies in Transport - Going Green

More about this option: This budget saving option is to appoint an independent expert to undertake a no-cost 'Green Fleet Review'. This review will examine the existing fleet in terms of vehicle choice, fuel economy and recommend mileage reduction strategies.

Saving: £20k

PROPOSAL: Capitalisation of Highways Salaries

More about this option: All highways and transport approved schemes for 2021/22 are funded from the Combined Authority allocation for Integrated Transport Block (ITB), which is £1.15m. It is anticipated that the new City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement allocation for Wirral over 5 years from 2022 will be between £5m and £11m. Revenue savings can be achieved by increasing capital recharges – that is staff time spent on individual schemes.

Saving: £15k

PROPOSAL: Highway's Maintenance Contracts

More about this option: This proposal will see a reduction in the highway lining and the street furniture budgets. This will include seating, guard rails, signs, and bollards.

Saving: £25k

PROPOSAL: Streetlighting Service Savings

More about this option: Due to the introduction of the new LED lanterns programme savings can be made through ceasing night-time lighting inspections. In addition, the capital investment for illuminated signage has enabled us to replace all the illuminated bollards with reflective surfaces, therefore savings can also be made within the illuminated signage budget.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Car Park Maintenance - 1 Year Budget Reduction

More about this option: This proposal will see a revenue saving from the car parks maintenance budget for 1 year only. A budget will remain for essential safety repairs to potholes etc.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Transport Efficiencies

More about this option: This proposal will include a review of the in-house fleet, such as the outsourcing of the tyre fitting supply, repair, and fitting service. A management restructure is also planned in order to realign the service and create workforce efficiencies.

Saving: £70k

PROPOSAL: Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport Review

More about this option: This proposal focuses on the outsourcing of the in-house SEN adult transport service. Savings are based on the average cost of the current external provision compared to in-house provision, plus outsourcing of tyre supply, repair, and fitting service.

Saving: £0 in 22-23 then £118k in 23-24

PROPOSAL: Eco and Forest School Income

More about this option: The council provides a well-established and highly regarded Eco Schools programme and has been developing a Forest Schools initiative. Such provision is currently offered to schools free of charge. This proposal sets out an opportunity to implement a charge for parts of these programmes.

Income: £20k

PROPOSAL: Tree Management Team Commercial Offer

More about this option: The primary purpose and function of the Tree Risk and Inspection Team is to inspect and manage the council's tree stock (both highways and parkland) and mitigate any risk associated. However, there is some capacity within the inspection team to conduct tree inspections and provide management advice for partnering organisations and other landowners.

Income: £25k income

PROPOSAL: Market Rental for Park Café

More about this option: This option will seek to increase the income received from rents, specifically for the rent of a café at Royden Park by a commercial operator.

Income: £10k

PROPOSAL: Income Increase on Allotments

More about this option: This option would seek to increase the income received from allotments by increasing the annual fees charged to allotment holders.

Income: £50k

PROPOSAL: Increase in Charges for Waste and Environmental Services

More about this option: This proposal would see an increase in charges (income) for a range of services provided by Waste and Environmental Services (including garden waste collection service subscription, skip permits, collection of bulky items, collection of waste and recycling from schools and cost to supply a new wheelie bin), as well as freezing the litter bin budget for one year and annual contract efficiency savings.

Income: £462k

PROPOSAL: Removal of Vacancies in Environmental and Waste Team

More about this option: This option seeks to approve a post for early voluntary retirement (EVR) from the Waste and Environmental Services Team, plus not filling of existing or new vacancies.

Saving: £100k

PROPOSAL: Suspension of Climate Emergency Initiatives

More about this option: This saving proposal would see the suspension of the budget for climate emergency action plan projects, for the period of one year. External funding will be sought to continue environmental projects where available.

Saving: £250k

PROPOSAL: Remodelling of Street Cleansing, Plus Special Events

More about this option: This option would see the removal of the additional community permanent presence street cleansing service in some areas of the borough, as well as the removal of the budget for cleansing of special events e.g., River of Light, Cycling Tour of Britain, Giants etc. Removing this budget would result in cleansing costs for special events being charged out to promoters/organisers.

Saving: £214k

PROPOSAL: Cease Overtime Budget in Parks

More about this option: This Savings option would review the use of the additional hours budget, given the reduced maintenance and cessation of green spaces.

Saving: £15k

PROPOSAL: Re-Design Parks Service Reducing Maintenance and Service Costs

More about this option: This option will focus on service reduction and maintenance in parks. It will include the cessation of public firework displays, a reduction in maintenance cuts from 10 to 8 per annum, ceasing maintenance in open spaces including up to 10-15 local parks, and ceasing maintenance of 50% of the remaining parks. Local parks which also have play areas, football pitches or bowling greens etc have been excluded from this list.

Saving: £655k

PROPOSAL: Income Strategy - Cemeteries and Crematorium Service

More about this option: This option would provide increase choice for bereaved families with regards to burials and memorials and offer corporate sponsorship opportunities within Wirral's Cemeteries and Crematorium grounds for funeral directors.

Income: £53k income

PROPOSAL: Review of Anti-Social Behaviour Team

More about this option: This option will involve an alternative service delivery model and reduction of one post. The Team will continue to prioritise the statutory functions and consider the impact on the Community Safety Strategy.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Review Engagement Officer Secondment

More about this option: This proposal will seek agreement to not backfill an Engagement Officer for one year secondment to Regeneration.

Saving: £35k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in Community Patrol Service

More about this option: This option would see a redesign of the Community Patrol Service to an Out of Hours / High Demand service only (the CCTV and Control Room Function will remain 24/7, 365).

Saving: £150k

PROPOSAL: 50% Reduction in School Crossing Patrol Service

More about this option: The service has 80 established sites but traditionally carries a number of vacancies due to difficulties in recruiting to the role. This option will require the permanent deletion of the 18 vacant sites plus the closing of at least a further 25 sites to be achieved by reprioritising of sites into highest risk areas / highest number of peds crossing.

Saving: £100k (22/23) £40k (23/24)

PROPOSAL: Cessation of Constituency Team and Remodelling of Section

More about this option: This saving presents the deletion of the Constituency Team and Redeployment of officers where possible. The saving will be achieved through associated staffing reductions.

Saving: £346k

PROPOSAL: Introduction of an Overnight Camper Van Parking Charge in New Brighton

More about this option: This option will focus on income generation from introducing an overnight parking charge for leisure vehicles (motorhomes / campervans) on the coastal areas of New Brighton.

There is currently no charge for overnight parking. New Brighton has seen regeneration and an increase in tourism in recent years. The proposal will help to manage overnight parking in this area which has also seen a significant growth particularly since the start of the pandemic.

Income: £35k

PROPOSAL: Deletion of Vacant Posts

More about this option: There are a number of vacant posts across the Neighbourhoods Directorate. This option would see these posts deleted to achieve the savings.

Saving: £302k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in The Budget for Office Related Expenditure

More about this option: This proposal is made up of a reduction in Neighbourhoods budgeted expenditure for office related expenses such as printing and paper services, lighting, electricity, heating, etc.

Saving: £23k

PROPOSAL: Review of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate

More about this option: A fundamental review of the Neighbourhood Directorate will take place in order to drive efficiencies and realign service. This will be achieved through an EVR process that will commence in early January.

Statutory services within this Directorate will not be affected by the review.

Saving: £360k

Have your say

Wirral Council Budget 2022-23 Public Consultation Report



Consultation: 2 November 2021 – 28 November 2021

Report: 6 December 2021

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1.0 Executive Summary

Wirral Council continues to face financial challenges as it moves ahead with setting a budget for 2022-23. The authority faces a potential maximum budget gap of around £30m between funding (from council tax, fees, and grants) and the cost of providing services at the current level.

The council must therefore plan to make any necessary savings in order to deliver a legal balanced budget.

At Policy and Resources committee on 25 October 2021 a stakeholder consultation programme was agreed. The objectives of the public consultation were to:

- Achieve a proportionate balance of responses which accurately reflects stakeholder make up
- Ensure external coverage is balanced in tone and content, with inaccuracies challenged
- Ensure residents and stakeholders understand the scale of the budget challenge, and feel able to contribute their views
- Provide an engagement plan that will:
- Allow residents to contribute strategically about what's important to them and their community
- Address the difficult budget choices/decisions that must be taken.

Through the consultation people were asked to tell us what their priorities are, what council services matter most to them, and where they believe the Council should be focusing its efforts to help develop the budget plan. The results of the consultation are provided in this report.

1.1 Key Findings

1.1.1 The Questionnaire

A total of 534 survey responses were received, 530 online responses and 4 paper copies. These responses have been amalgamated and are reported on as a whole.

- **Parks and Open Spaces** and **Children’s Services** were highlighted as being among the top 3 for both most valued services (Q1) and most important services to invest more resources in (Q2).
- Q1. The services that were most frequently placed as being most valued were:
 1. Children’s Services (46.1% of respondents)
 2. Parks and Open Spaces (42.5%)
 3. Adult Social care (40.0%)
- Q2. The services that were most frequently placed as most important to invest more resources in were:
 1. Parks & Open Spaces (39.2%)
 2. Museums (39.0%)
 3. Children’s Services (36.3%)
- Q3. **Safe and Pleasant Communities** was the priority most frequently placed as most important, by 46.2% of respondents.
 - Within the **Safe and Pleasant Communities** priority, working with partner agencies to reduce crime and tackle anti-social behaviour was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 53.3% of respondents.
 - Within the **Sustainable Environment** priority, the protection of our local environment action was most frequently placed as most important, by 41.8% of respondents.
 - Within the **Brighter Futures** priority, ensuring our children and young people have equal access to education opportunities was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents.
 - Within the **Inclusive Economy** priority, supporting local businesses and job creation was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents.

- Within the **Active and Healthy Lives** priority, working collaboratively with our partner agencies to improve mental wellbeing was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 34.6% of respondents.
- Suggestions and Ideas that appeared in-common on both the free text section of the questionnaire (Q4) and the ideas board were:
 - The council should have fewer consultants (32 comments/23 ideas).
 - The council should have fewer councillors (29 comments /38 ideas).

See below for a full summary of the free text responses to Question 4.

See section 1.1.2 for a full summary of the ideas board.

Q4. Respondents were invited to outline suggestions as to how the council could make additional savings or generate income.

- The most common themes that suggestions fell in to were:
 - Council workforce (136 people).
 - Council operation (54).
 - Suggestions for chargeable services (51).
- Overall the top specific suggestions were:
 - The council should have fewer consultants (32).
 - The council should have fewer councillors (29).
 - Reduce salaries within the council (26).

1.1.2 The Ideas Board

- 112 contributions were made to the ideas board by 78 participants. Contributions could be in the form of an idea (x80) or a comment on an idea (x32) and participants were able to make more than one submission.
- The most common themes that ideas fell in to were:
 - Council's operation and structure (score of 71).
 - Ideas relating to maintenance (57).
 - Ideas relating to golf courses (42).
- The most popular and 'liked' specific ideas were:

- The council should have fewer councillors (38).
- Hoylake Beach should be maintained (24).
- The council should use fewer consultants (23).

1.1.3 Demographics

- Most of the respondents (87.9%) classed themselves as local residents.
- The most represented Wirral Ward is Hoylake and Meols (11.3%), the least represented Wirral Ward was Bromborough (0.2%).
- Most Wirral respondents were in Decile 1 or decile 6 of the IMD (13.7% each), where decile 1 is the most deprived, and decile 10 is the least deprived.
- 59.3% of respondents were male; 36.4% were female.
- The most represented age group was 65–74-year-olds (24.7%).
- The least represented age group was 16–27-year-olds (0.8%).
- 93.4% of respondents were of white British ethnicity.
- 2.7% were of a non-white or 'other' ethnicity.
- 81.6% of respondents were heterosexual.

2.0 Methodology

Through the budget consultation people were asked to tell us what their priorities are, what council services matter most to them, and where they believe the Council should be focusing its efforts to help develop the budget plan.

Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 17 January 2022, where further budget consideration will be made. Full Council will have the final say on the authority's budget for the next year.

The consultation was carried out between 2 November – 28 November 2021. The approach used was an online public consultation through the 'Have your say' consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk with a page dedicated to the Budget Consultation. A Budget Booklet, a Financial Strategy Document and an Easy Read Version of the consultation were published on the portal and available for download to provide key information about the consultation.

Two online tools were provided for residents to engage with:

- An online questionnaire – to respond to specific questions about budget proposals.
- An ideas board – for residents to post 'ideas' about the council budget.

Respondents were also able to request paper copies of the survey, including an easy read version, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the 'Have your say' website alongside the online tool.

2.1 Questionnaire

The consultation questionnaire was developed on the themes of the Wirral Plan and enabled stakeholders to record their feedback and opinions on how the council budget could be allocated, and savings made according to their priorities and what matters to them most. To enable further understanding, and in-depth analysis, respondents were invited to provide free-text comments to expand on their ideas or concerns.

Following closure of the consultation, the responses to each of the direct questions were collated and the responses included in this report. For the free-text comment question, a text coding approach was used based on the reoccurring themes. This data was then collated and summarised in the report. Free text results are provided as a count, rather than as percentages. This is because one comment or idea may cover multiple themes, therefore there are considerably more themes than contributions. Percentages derived from this as a denominator are non-sensical and confusing so have been omitted

Four paper questionnaires were submitted. These responses were examined, and the points raised incorporated into the online questionnaire results to ensure the views were represented in the final analysis.

2.2 Ideas Board

The Ideas Board function was set up to allow respondents to submit their own ideas about the budget, these could be voted for ('liked') and commented on by other members of the public.

Ideas and comments were reviewed and categorised into themes. Those categories of ideas that were most prevalent and/or most 'liked' have been identified and highlighted.

Ideas Board results are provided as a score, rather than as percentages. This is because one comment or idea may cover multiple themes, therefore there are considerably more themes than contributions. Percentages derived from this as a denominator are non-sensical and confusing so have been omitted.

2.3 Staff Feedback

In addition to direct Manager/ Departmental Management Team communications, a specific area was set up on the council's new Intranet Platform. This included channels for questions, feedback, and ideas, as well as links to the Have Your Say platform. Regular staff briefings, member engagement, 'Exec view' messages and specific sessions for our harder to reach staff were also undertaken. All responses were reviewed and summarised for reporting.

2.5 Analysis of Respondents

Respondents to the online tools were provided with the option to provide demographic information about themselves. It must be noted that this is an option and that not all respondents included this information. This data allows the demographic results to be included in this report to enable analysis of the scope of responses and representation from different demographic groups.

2.6 Interpretation of Results

In terms of the results, it is important to note that:

- The public consultation is not representative of the overall population but provides information on the opinion of those residents who engaged.
- For specific tools where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded. All free-text questions and ideas that offered respondents the option to provide written feedback could have covered multiple

themes. Therefore, with free-text responses being categorised using a coding system, some comments will be multi-coded and therefore add up to more than 100 percent.

The Policy and Resources Committee requested that the engagement should aim to ‘Achieve a proportionate balance of responses which accurately reflects stakeholder make up’. To achieve responses from a representative sample of the Wirral population would require a range of targeted engagement to ensure the correct sample size, and coverage of response from the correct population demographics. Consultations designed to achieve this are often run in a range of stages based on analysis of the responses throughout the process and often use a range of engagement techniques such as contacting residents using a call centre. The time frame allowed to run this consultation did not allow this to be achieved. As noted above this consultation provides information on the opinion of residents who engaged.

2.7 Communication

A major social and digital media sub campaign was also carried out, which included regular messaging, targeted demographical and geographical communications, resident e-newsletters, and regular theme specific stories, linking with the narrative, and urging residents and stakeholders to take part in the consultation.

Through partnership agreements, we worked closely with Wirral Globe, Metro, and more local digital news channels. A mix of printed adverts and advertorials were placed to encourage participation, as well as digital click-through links and targeted news stories.

3.0 Results

3.1 Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was responded to by 534 people, with 530 through the online portal and 4 paper copies submitted. No questions were mandatory so respondents could choose which questions to respond to.

Due to the size of data tables, the main tables for each of the closed questions are contained in [Appendix 1](#).

Council Services

Q1. Which Council Services do you value the most?

“We believe the services the council provides are all important. In planning for how we fund and deliver these services, we want to know more about which council services(s) you value the most”.

Please tell us how important these services are to you on a scale of 1-5 (1 being very important and 5 being of no importance at all).

The services that were most frequently placed as being most valued were:

1. Children’s Services (46.1% of respondents)
2. Parks and Open Spaces (42.5%)
3. Adult Social care (40.0%)

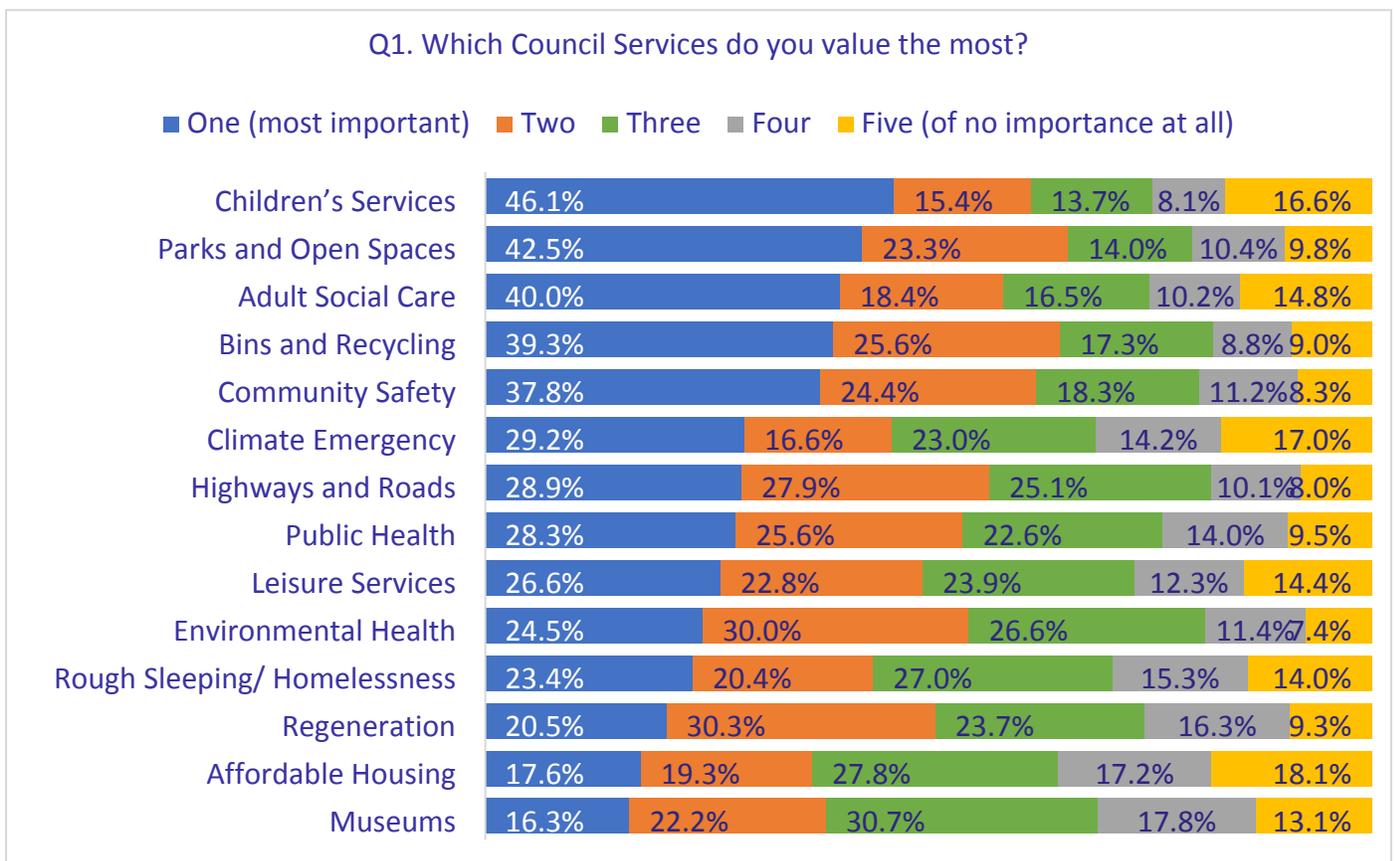


Figure 1: Chart showing which Council Services respondents value the most

Those services most frequently placed as least valued were:

4. Affordable Housing (18.1%)
5. Climate Emergency (17.0%)
6. Children’s Services (16.6%)

Q2. Tell us which services you believe the council needs to invest more resources into.

The services that were most frequently placed as most important to invest more resources in were:

1. Parks & Open Spaces (39.2%)
2. Museums (39.0%)
3. Children’s Services (36.3%)

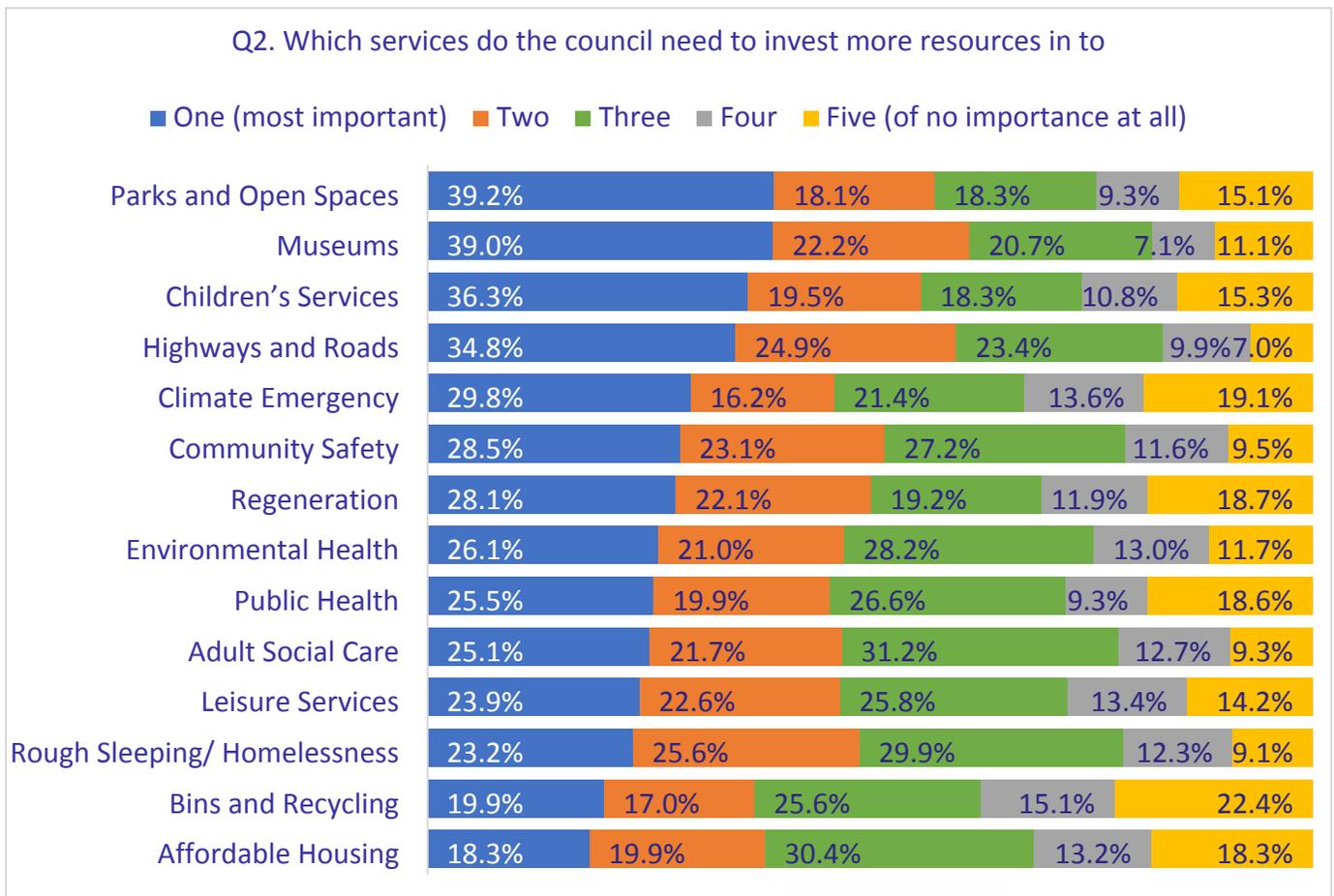


Figure 2: Chart showing which services respondents feel that the council needs to invest more resources into

Those services that were most frequently placed as of no importance at all to invest more resources in were:

1. Bins and Recycling (22.4%)
2. Climate Emergency (19.1%)

The Wirral Plan and the council budget

Q3. Please tell us how important these priorities are to you on a scale of 1-5.

Safe and Pleasant Communities was the priority most frequently placed as most important, by 46.2% of respondents.

Active and Healthy Lives (31.8%), Brighter Futures (31.4%) and a Sustainable Environment (31.3%) were all similarly placed in importance.

A Sustainable Environment was the priority most frequently placed as of no importance at all (13.1%).

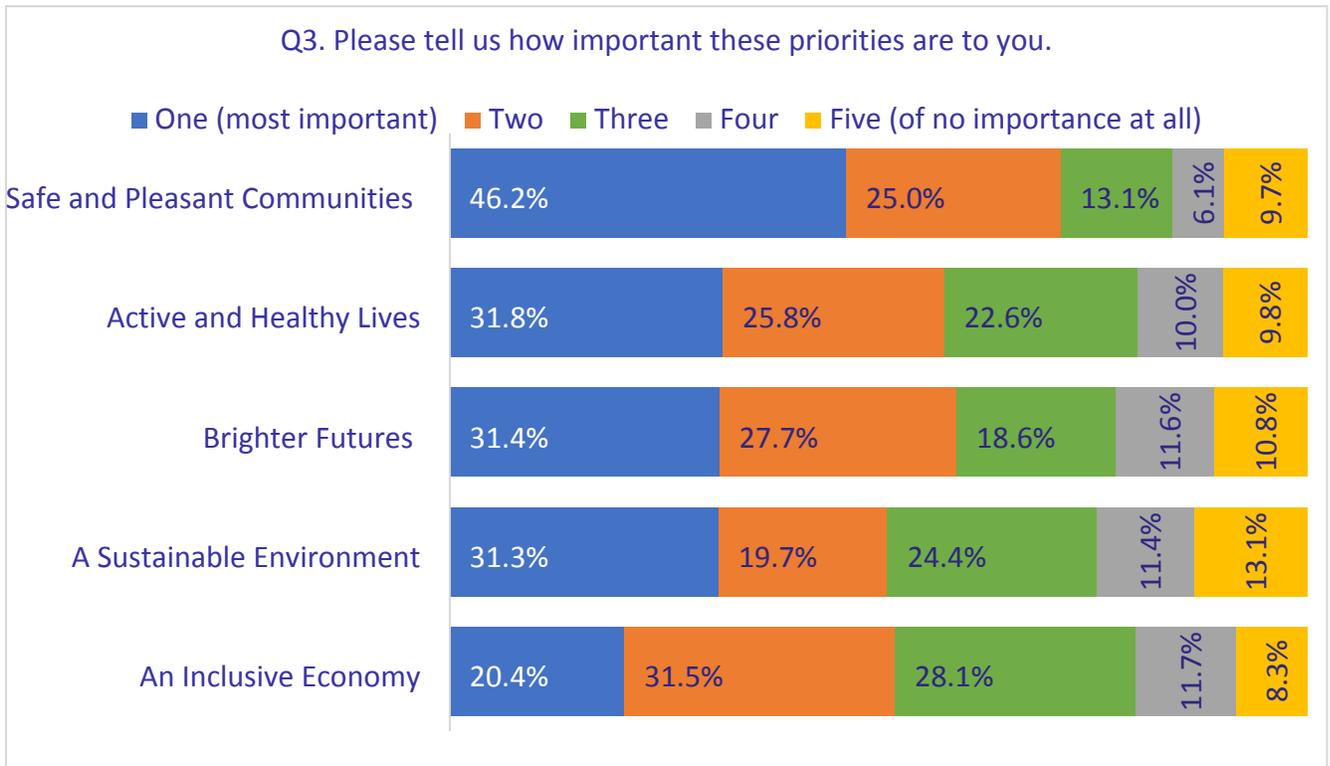


Figure 3: Chart showing how important these priorities are to respondents

Q4. Sustainable Environment: How important are these actions?

Within the Sustainable Environment priority, the protection of our local environment action was most frequently placed as most important, by 41.8% of respondents.

The continue to respond to the climate emergency action was most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (14.9%).

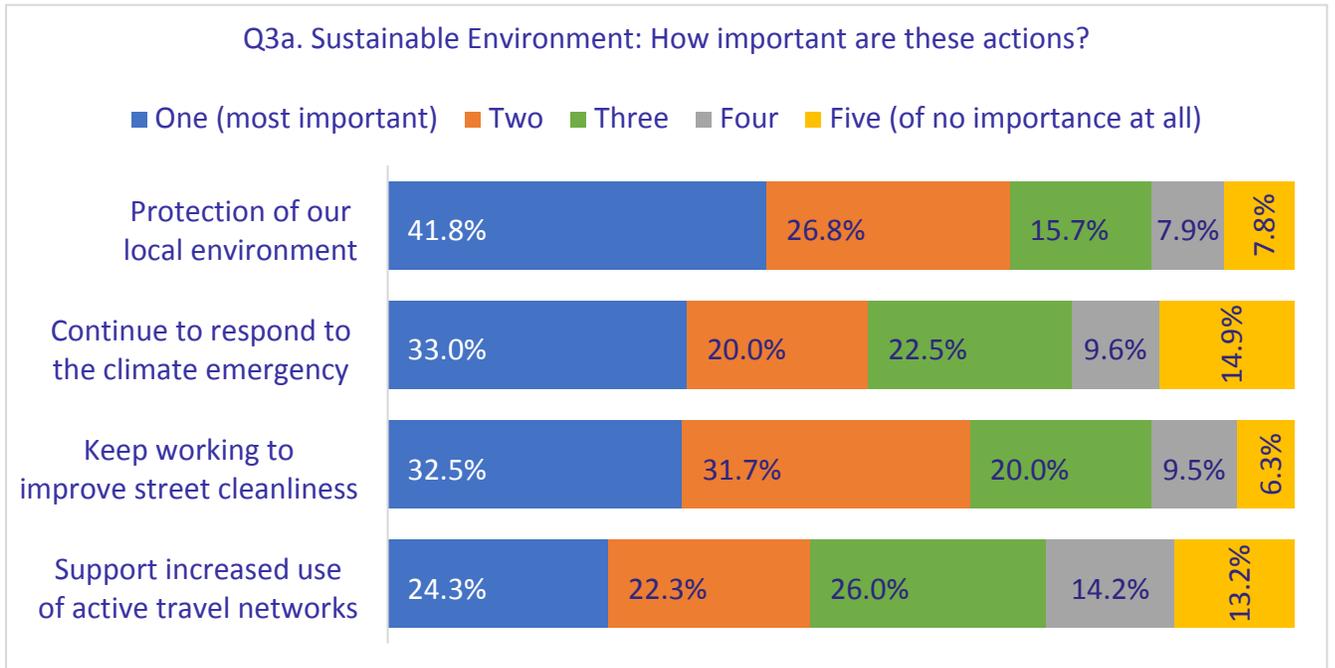


Figure 4: Chart showing how important the Sustainable Environment actions are to respondents

Q5. Brighter futures: How important are these actions?

Within the Brighter Futures priority, ensuring our children and young people have equal access to education opportunities was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents. This was also the action most frequently placed as being of ‘no importance at all’.

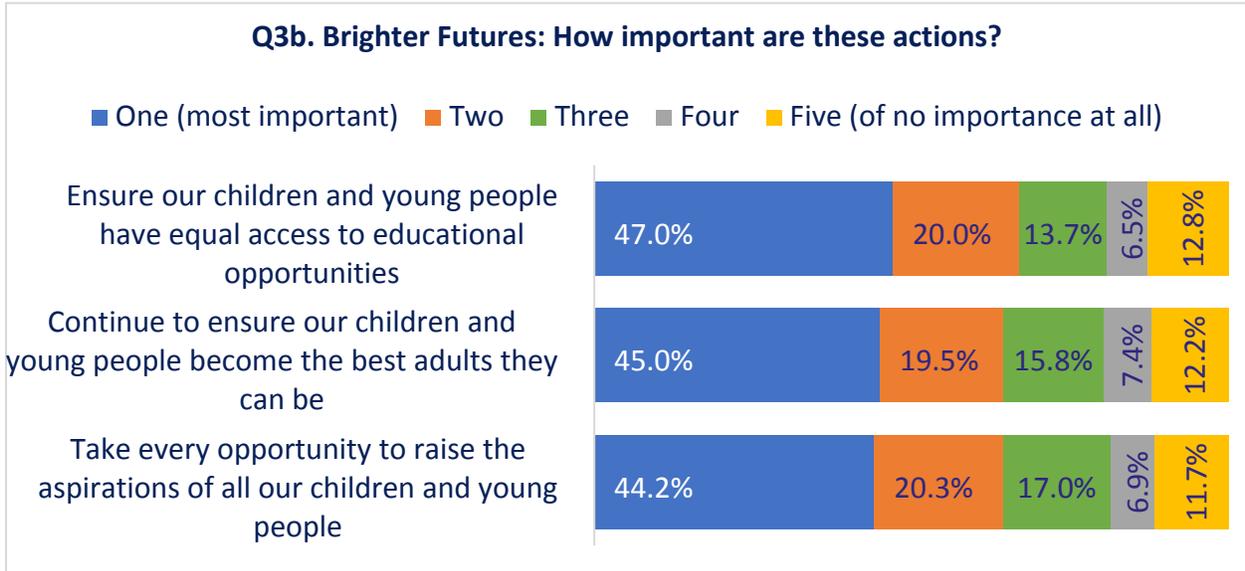


Figure 5: Chart showing how important the Brighter Futures actions are to respondents

Q6. Inclusive Economy: How important are these actions?

Within the Inclusive Economy priority, supporting local businesses and job creation was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents.

Developing quality, affordable, sustainable homes was most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (13.7%).

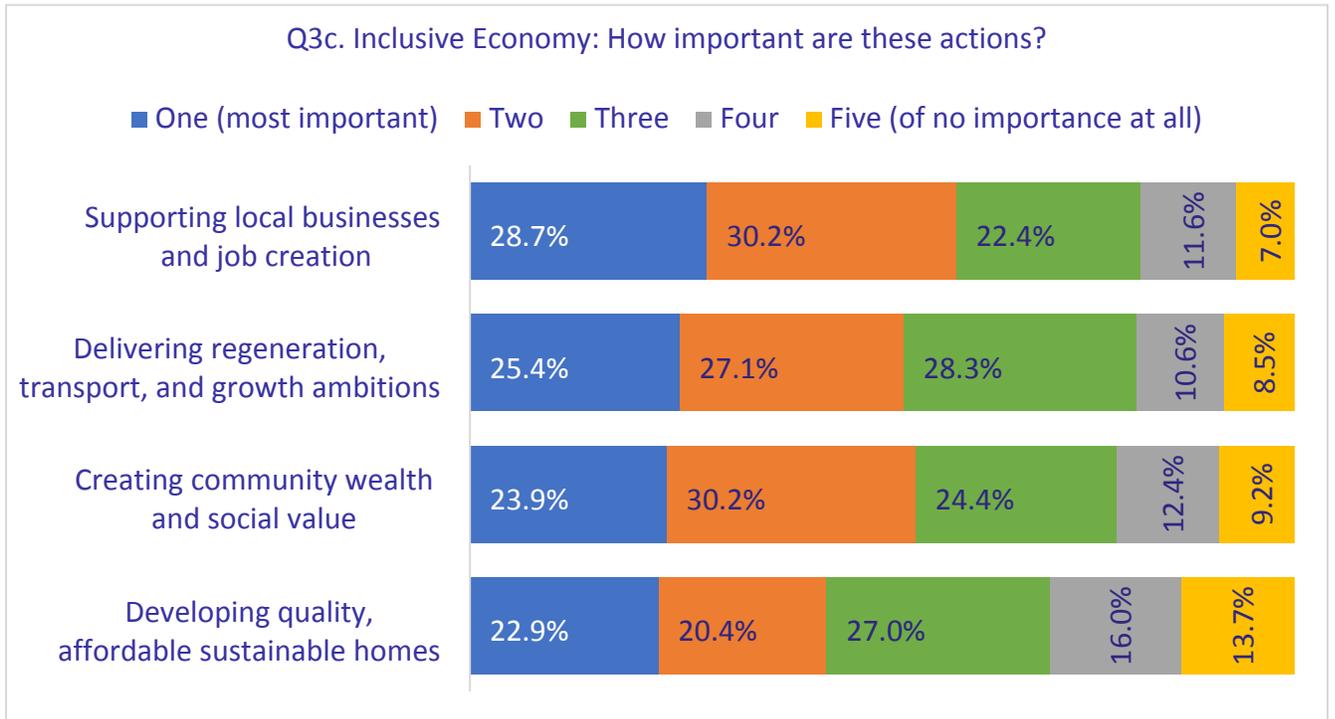


Figure 6: Chart showing how important the Inclusive Economy actions are to respondents

Q7. Safe and Pleasant Community: How important are these actions?

Within the Safe and Pleasant Community priority, working with partner agencies to reduce crime and tackle anti-social behaviour was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 53.3% of respondents.

Tackling rough sleeping and homelessness was most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (13.7%).

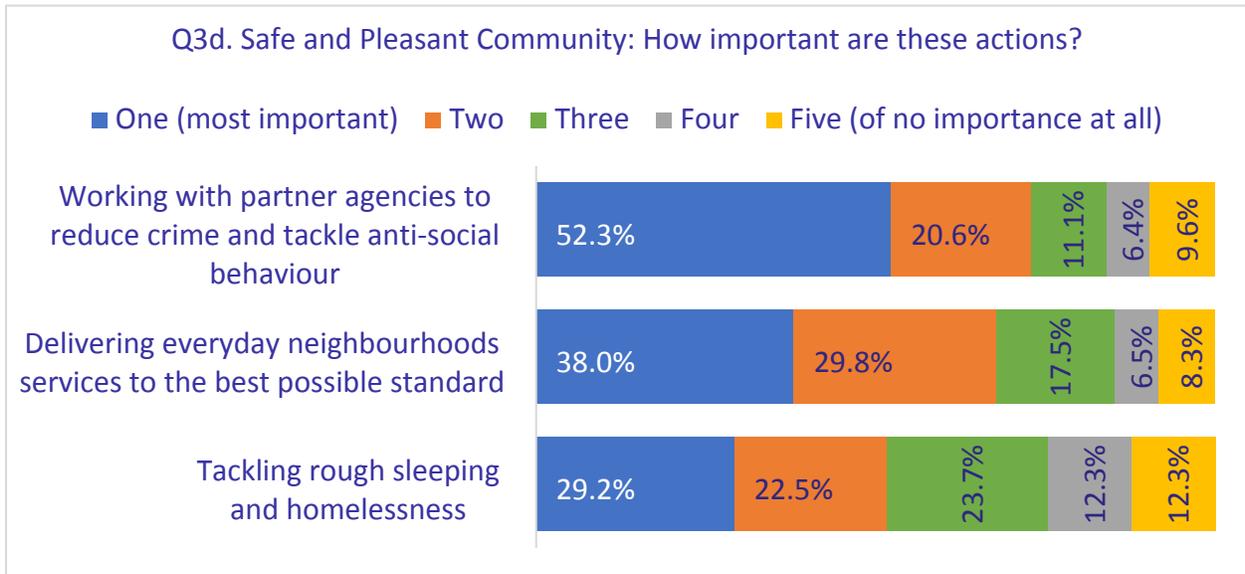


Figure 7: Chart showing how important the Safe and Pleasant Community actions are to respondents

Q8. Active and Healthy Lives: How important are these actions?

Within the Active and Healthy Lives priority, working collaboratively with our partner agencies to improve mental wellbeing was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 34.6% of respondents. This action was also most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (11.8%).

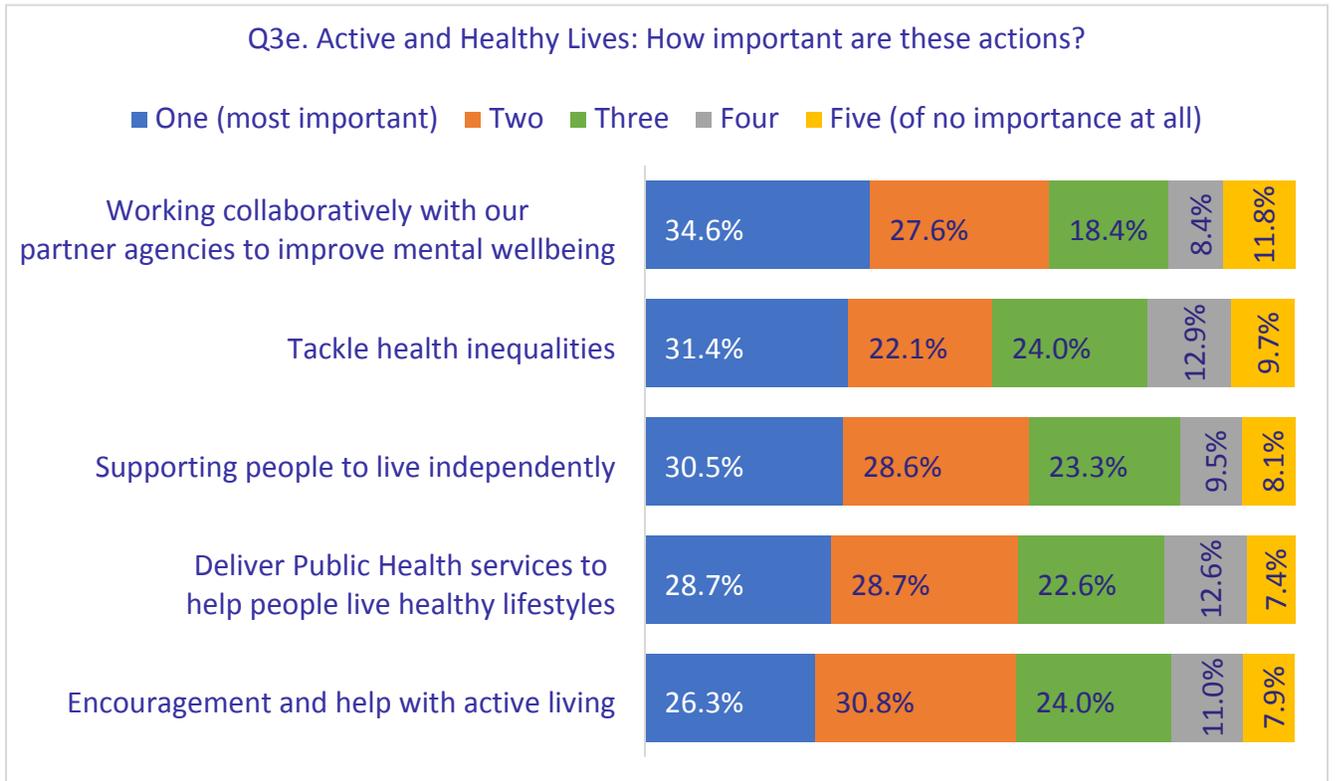


Figure 8: Chart showing how important the Active and Healthy Lives actions are to respondents

Q9. Please outline any suggestions you may have for how the council can make additional savings or potential sources of income.

The most common themes that suggestions fell in to were:

1. Council workforce (136).
2. Council operation (54).
3. Suggestions for chargeable services (51).



Figure 9: Top categories of suggestions

| Main Category | Count |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Council Workforce | 136 |
| Council Operation | 54 |
| Chargeable Service suggestions | 51 |
| Regeneration | 46 |
| Assets | 42 |
| Service closure/reduction | 36 |
| Maintenance | 30 |
| Leisure Services | 29 |
| Fines and enforcement | 26 |
| Climate Emergency | 25 |
| Golf Courses | 20 |

Table 1: Top categories of suggestion.

Overall the top specific suggestions:

1. The council should have fewer consultants (32).
2. The council should have fewer councillors (29).
3. Reduce salaries within the council (26).



Figure 10: Top suggestions

| Category | Subcategory | Total |
|---------------------|---|-------|
| Council Workforce | Fewer consultants | 32 |
| Council Workforce | Fewer councillors | 29 |
| Council Workforce | Reduce salaries within council | 26 |
| Assets | Sell council buildings | 22 |
| Regeneration | Cease existing projects - no new projects | 21 |
| Chargeable Services | Parking charges - support | 16 |
| Chargeable Services | Parking charges - oppose | 14 |
| Maintenance | Hoylake Beach - Rake/clean up | 14 |

Table 2: Top suggestions



Below is a summary of those suggestions that were put forward more than 10 times.

1. **The council should employ fewer consultants (32).** Council workforce.

32 people put this forward as a suggestion. It is felt that the functions carried out by consultants should be carried out in-house, and that a workforce should be recruited that have the necessary skills.

2. **Reduce the number of Councillors serving Wirral (29).** Council workforce

29 people put forward this suggestion. Most commonly, people suggested that there should be only 1 or 2 councillors per ward, and that expenses paid should be reduced.

3. **Reduce salaries paid (26).** Council workforce

26 people put forward this suggestion. It is felt that salaries, particularly amongst upper management should be reduced or capped.

4. **Sell council-owned buildings (22).** Assets

22 people put forward this suggestion as a way of potentially generating revenue and saving costs in maintaining older buildings. There were 4 counter suggestions, where people were against selling off buildings, particularly the town halls.

5. **Curtail regeneration projects and do not embark on new ones (21)** Regeneration

21 people suggested that the various regeneration projects do not represent value for money and often do not reach fruition. It is felt that money should be spent on essential services and/or where there will be an immediate impact. 7 of the suggestions specifically mentioned that regeneration in Birkenhead in particular should cease.

6. **Parking charges - for (16) and against (14)** Chargeable services

Parking charges divided opinion amongst the suggestions.

16 people suggested that parking charges should be retained, or introduced, in order to increase revenue and/or deter car use. Some suggest all car parking should be charged, others that specific types should be chargeable such as on-street parking, parking at retail parks, workplace parking and non-resident parking.

There were 14 counter suggestions to this, suggesting that to charge for parking at smaller town and village high streets would have a detrimental effect on the businesses there, result in closures, and encourage people to out of town retail parks instead. It is also highlighted that removing parking charges at beauty spots would encourage people to be active and improve health and wellbeing.

7. **Hoylake Beach - Rake/clean-up (14) Maintenance**

14 people suggested that maintenance resume at Hoylake beach, and that it be returned to an 'amenity beach. The prevalent feeling in regard to this is that beach is no longer usable for leisure and recreation by the community, nor is an attraction to visitors. It is felt this will have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing and the local economy. In addition, it is thought that the unmaintained beach will attract vermin.

3.2 Ideas Board Results

Ideas were examined and sorted into categories and given a 'score' based on the frequency that the idea was put forward and how many likes they received. Counter comments have been taken into account, and where someone disagrees with an idea, or submits an opposing idea, the score was adjusted (reduced) accordingly.

The score was calculated by adding the number of submissions and number of combined likes and subtracting the number of counter comments.

Where one individual has made multiple submissions saying the same thing, these are combined to one submission per category discussed. Any 'likes' accrued across the submissions are combined and retained.

The most popular type of ideas were those relating to the

1. Council's operation and structure (score of 71).
2. Ideas relating to maintenance (57).
3. Ideas relating to golf courses (42).

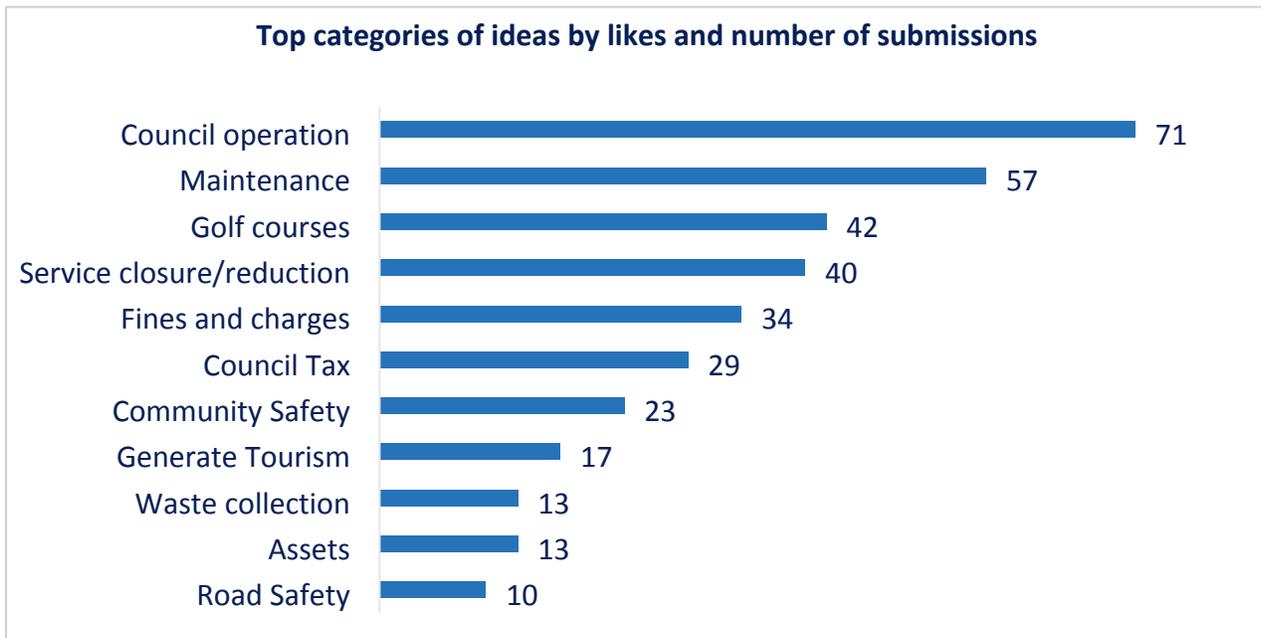


Figure 11: Top idea categories

| Category | Sum of Likes | Submissions | Total approval |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Council operation | 58 | 13 | 71 |
| Maintenance | 41 | 16 | 57 |
| Golf courses | 24 | 18 | 42 |
| Service closure/reduction | 26 | 14 | 40 |
| Fines and charges | 24 | 10 | 34 |
| Council Tax | 21 | 8 | 29 |
| Community Safety | 17 | 6 | 23 |
| Generate Tourism | 15 | 2 | 17 |
| Waste collection | 11 | 2 | 13 |
| Assets | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| Road Safety | 8 | 2 | 10 |

Table 3: Top idea categories – score matrix

The most popular and ‘liked’ specific ideas were:

1. The council should have fewer councillors (38).
2. Hoylake Beach should be maintained (24).
3. The council should use fewer consultants (23).

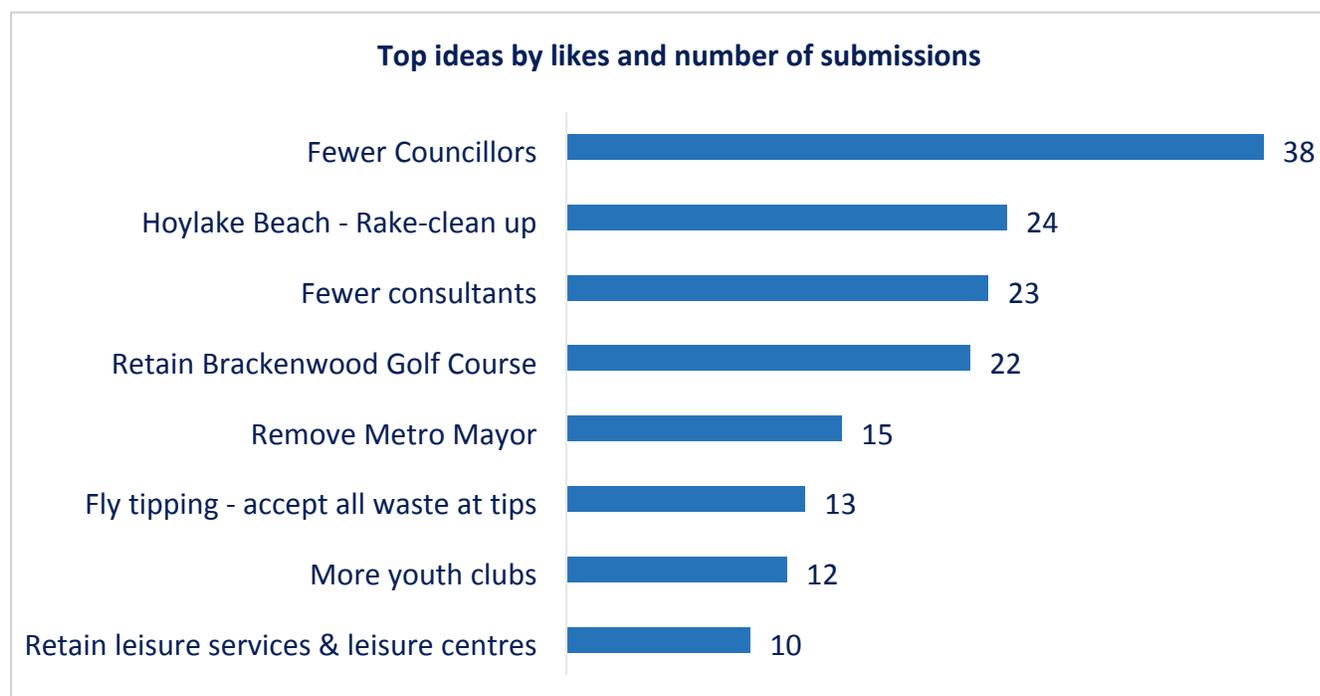


Figure 12: Top individual ideas

| Row Labels | Sum of Likes | Submissions | Counter Comment | Total approval |
|---|--------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Fewer Councillors | 33 | 5 | | 38 |
| Hoylake Beach - Rake-clean up | 25 | 7 | 8 | 24 |
| Fewer consultants | 20 | 3 | | 23 |
| Retain Brackenwood Golf Course | 17 | 5 | | 22 |
| Remove Metro Mayor | 14 | 2 | 1 | 15 |
| Fly tipping - accept all waste tips | 11 | 2 | | 13 |
| More youth clubs | 10 | 2 | | 12 |
| Retain leisure services & leisure centres | 7 | 3 | | 10 |

Table 4: Top individual ideas – score matrix

Below is a summary of those ideas that achieved a frequency and popularity score of more than 10:

1. **Reduce the number of Councillors serving Wirral (38).** Council Operation and Structure

Five people put forward submissions mentioning this as an idea, which between them garnered 33 ‘likes’. Most commonly, people suggested that there should be only 1 councillor per ward, not 3.

One of these submissions was the joint most popular idea on the ideas board and received 14 ‘likes’:

Reduce the number of Wirral Councillors

I feel we could cut the number of councillors in each ward. Pensby, Thingwall & Irby has 3. Totally unnecessary. Whilst ward councillors do not receive a salary they do receive allowances, are loaned computer equipment when required. Every little helps.

Share    

1 Comment

14 

2. **Resume maintenance of Hoylake Beach (24)** Maintenance

Seven people put forward submissions relating to this, which between them garnered 25 ‘likes’. There were also contrary opinions about this (8), that the beach should be returned to nature, which have been taken into account in the final scoring.

The feeling is that beach is no longer usable for leisure and recreation by the community, nor is an attraction to visitors. It is felt this will have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing and the local economy.

The counter argument is that it would be environmentally beneficial to see the beach returned to nature and would attract wildlife and thus wildlife enthusiasts. It saves maintenance costs and stabilises the sand.

3. **Council to employ fewer consultants (23)** Council Operation and Structure

Three ideas to this effect were submitted, which garnered 23 'likes'. The prevalent feeling is that consultants were expensive and unnecessary. It is felt that the work should be carried out in-house and staff employed who could carry out the roles currently outsourced.

4. **Retain Brackenwood Golf Course (22)** Golf

Five people submitted ideas and comments to this effect, which were 'liked' by 17 people.

Brackenwood Golf Course is predominantly mentioned in terms of courses that should be retained, Hoylake golf course and the plans for an Arrowe Park golf resort were mentioned as those that could be sold or scrapped.

5. **Remove metro mayor charge from council tax (15)** Council Tax

Two people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 14 likes. It is felt that this function does not benefit Wirral.

One of these submissions was the joint most popular idea on the ideas board and received 14 'likes':

Scrap metro mayor tax from council tax.

It's a pointless greedy tax, that does not benefit Wirral

Share    

2 Comments

14 

There was a counter comment to this submission which stated that a metro mayor afforded the ability to make regional decisions independent of Westminster, and that funding was attached to role.

6. **Reduce fly tipping by accepting all waste at tips and making kerbside collections cheaper (13)** Waste Collection

Two people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 11 likes.

By accepting all types of waste, and commercial waste at Wirral recycling centres fly-tipping would be greatly reduced or eliminated thus saving the cost of clearance. Similarly, if kerb-side bulk waste collection services were cheaper, this would lead to a reduction in fly tipping.

7. More youth clubs (12) Community safety and crime prevention

Two people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 10 likes.

It is noted that there is little for young people to do, and this can lead to anti-social behaviour born of boredom. The Hive in Birkenhead is highlighted as being a success and it is suggested that specifically West Kirby youth club should re-open.

8. Retain services and leisure centres (10) Health & wellbeing

Three people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 7 likes.

The benefits of sport and leisure on physical and mental health are highlighted as particularly important following COVID-19 restrictions. It is specifically queried as to why Woodchurch Leisure Centre is not open.

3.3 Staff Engagement

There were five staff responses fed back through the channel set up within the Council. The key areas in the feedback included:

Ideas for cost savings:

- Income generation in services such as cemeteries and crematorium.
- Reduce spending on buildings by reducing the Councils assets or bringing more services together to share buildings.
- Reducing the number of inappropriate jobs created in some parts of the Council. Inappropriate jobs relate to those established without consultation, ring fenced to certain individuals, lack of job evaluation and manager level pay with no management responsibility.
- To have a more inclusive curriculum and education system with support within schools and colleges utilising learning bases so a lot of money doesn't have to be spent on alternative curriculum for young people.
- Utilising the services that already exist including third sector to support instead of creating new services.
- Utilising tourists' spots to bring money in.

- Having more courses and educational opportunities in the Wirral so people don't have to travel out or move away.

What the Council priorities should be:

- Vulnerable Adults and Children
- Front line services e.g., bins, streetlighting, schools, social services.
- Use of the intelligence we have.
- Valuing and utilising the skills of the experienced staff we have.
- Senior management listening to ideas from staff not just once a year at budget time.
- Investing in young people, more opportunities and youth workers in the communities where young people are.

4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic

4.1 Demographics

Registration was required to engage in the online Budget Consultation. The registration form included questions regarding demographics including gender, age group, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, however not all questions in the registration form were compulsory and respondents could choose to select ‘prefer not to say’ or skip the question. The demographics results are summarised below.

Most of the respondents (87.9%) classed themselves as local residents.



Figure 13: Who are you registering as?

| Are you registering as: | Count | % |
|---|------------|---------------|
| A local resident | 494 | 87.9% |
| An employee of Wirral Council | 32 | 5.7% |
| A member of a voluntary or community organisation | 21 | 3.7% |
| A local Business | 7 | 1.2% |
| Other | 6 | 1.1% |
| An elected Member of Wirral Council | 2 | 0.4% |
| Total | 562 | 100.0% |

Table 5: Who are you registered as?

The most represented Wirral Ward is Hoylake and Meols (11.3%), the least represented Wirral Ward was Bromborough (0.2%). Most Wirral respondents were in Decile 1 or decile 6 of the IMD (13.7% each), where decile 1 is the most deprived, and decile 10 is the least deprived.

Parts of Seacombe and Bidston and St. James were most represented in decile 1. Parts of Hoylake and Meols ward was most represented in decile 6.

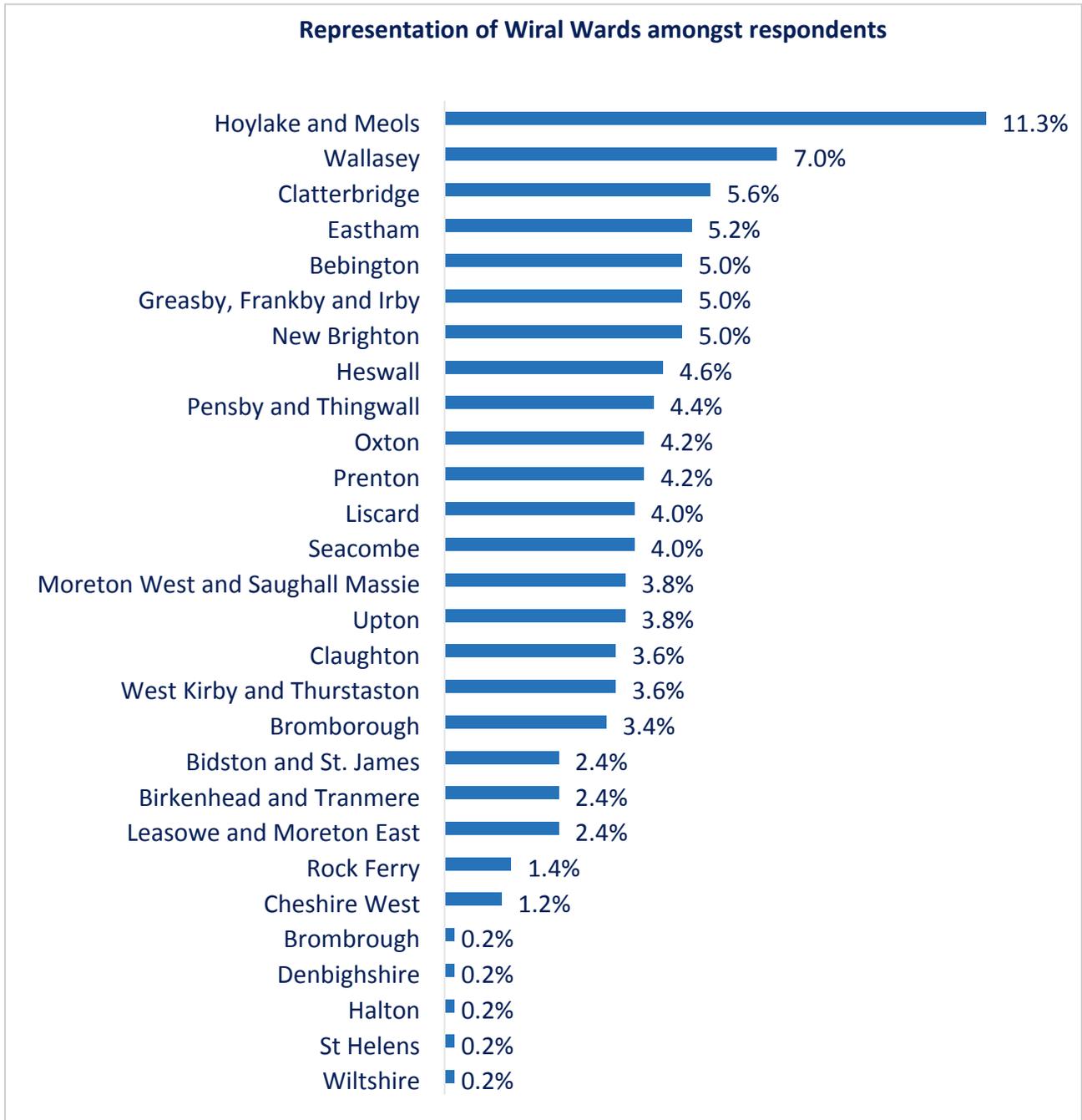


Chart 1: Respondent location by ward

| Ward Name | Count | % |
|----------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Hoylake and Meols | 57 | 11.3% |
| Wallasey | 35 | 7.0% |
| Clatterbridge | 28 | 5.6% |
| Eastham | 26 | 5.2% |
| Bebington | 25 | 5.0% |
| Greasby, Frankby and Irby | 25 | 5.0% |
| New Brighton | 25 | 5.0% |
| Heswall | 23 | 4.6% |
| Pensby and Thingwall | 22 | 4.4% |
| Oxton | 21 | 4.2% |
| Prenton | 21 | 4.2% |
| Liscard | 20 | 4.0% |
| Seacombe | 20 | 4.0% |
| Moreton West and Saughall Massie | 19 | 3.8% |
| Upton | 19 | 3.8% |
| Claughton | 18 | 3.6% |
| West Kirby and Thurstaston | 18 | 3.6% |
| Bromborough | 17 | 3.4% |
| Bidston and St. James | 12 | 2.4% |
| Birkenhead and Tranmere | 12 | 2.4% |
| Leasowe and Moreton East | 12 | 2.4% |
| Rock Ferry | 7 | 1.4% |
| Cheshire West | 6 | 1.2% |
| Bromborough | 1 | 0.2% |
| Denbighshire | 1 | 0.2% |
| Halton | 1 | 0.2% |
| St Helens | 1 | 0.2% |
| Wiltshire | 1 | 0.2% |
| Uncategorised | 10 | 2.0% |
| Total | 503 | 100.0% |

Table 6: Respondent location by ward.

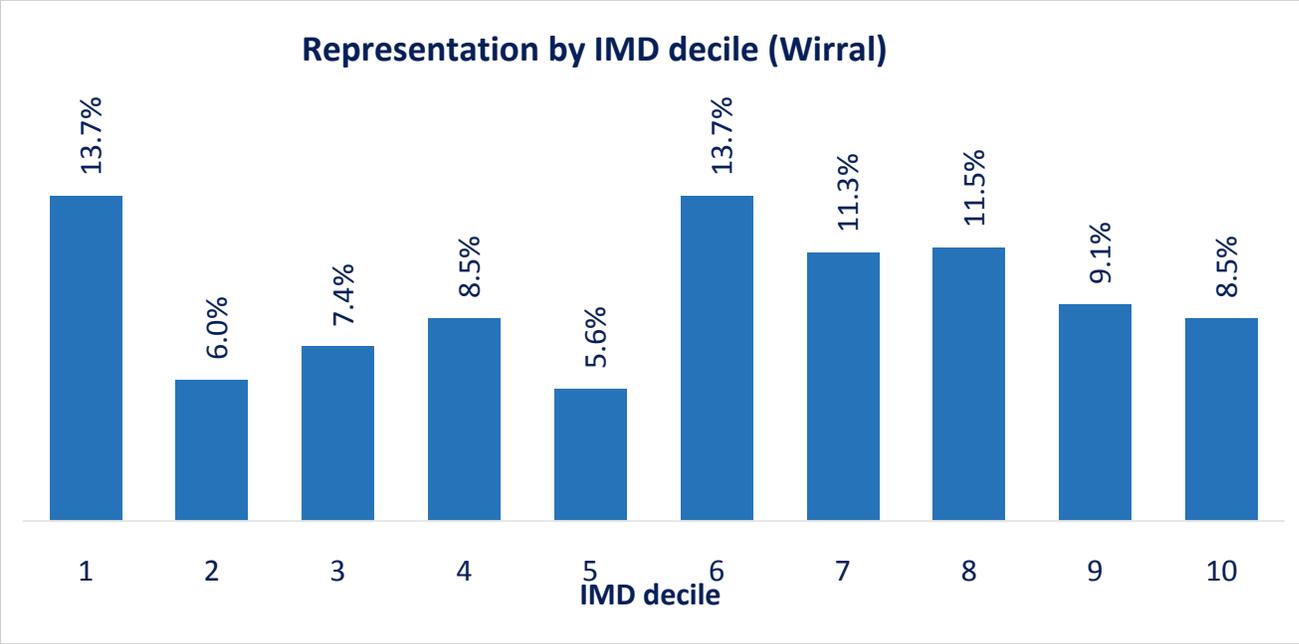


Figure 14: Representation by IMD decile

| IMD Decile | Count | % |
|----------------|------------|---------------|
| 1 | 69 | 13.7% |
| 2 | 30 | 6.0% |
| 3 | 37 | 7.4% |
| 4 | 43 | 8.5% |
| 5 | 28 | 5.6% |
| 6 | 69 | 13.7% |
| 7 | 57 | 11.3% |
| 8 | 58 | 11.5% |
| 9 | 46 | 9.1% |
| 10 | 43 | 8.5% |
| Outside Wirral | 10 | 2.0% |
| Unavailable | 13 | 2.6% |
| Total | 503 | 100.0% |

Table 7: Representation by IMD decile

The gender of respondents was 59.3% male, 36.4% female, with 3.5% preferring not to say and 0.8% preferring their own term.

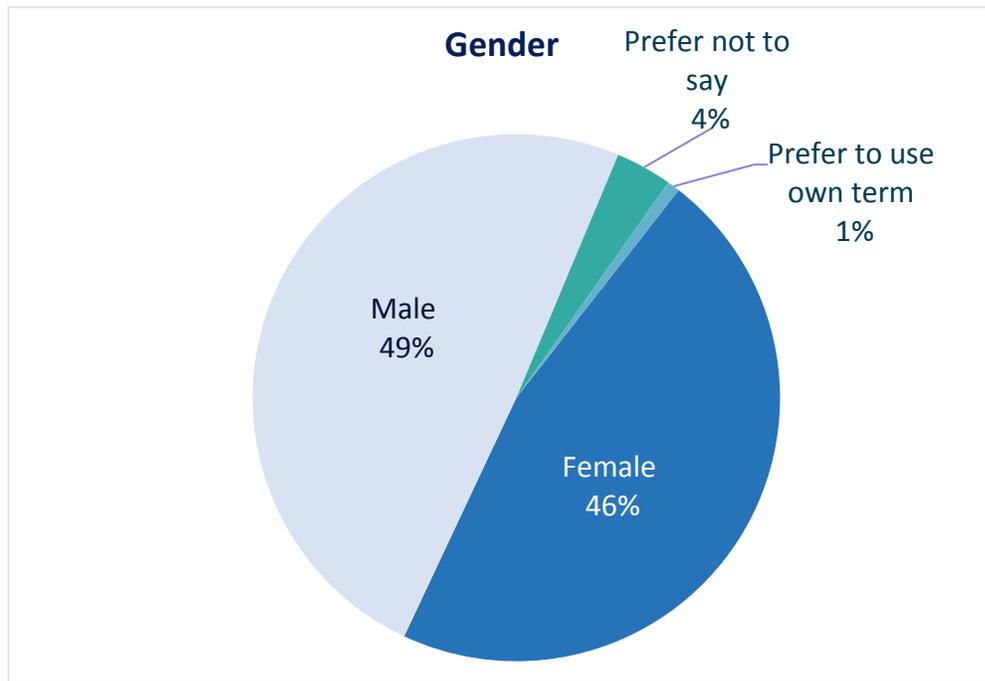


Chart 2: Gender of respondents

The age group profile is illustrated with the most common age groups were 65-74 years (24.7%), followed by 55-64 years (23.1%) and 45-54 years (20.4%). The least represented groups were 16-24 years (0.8%) and over 75s (7.6%).

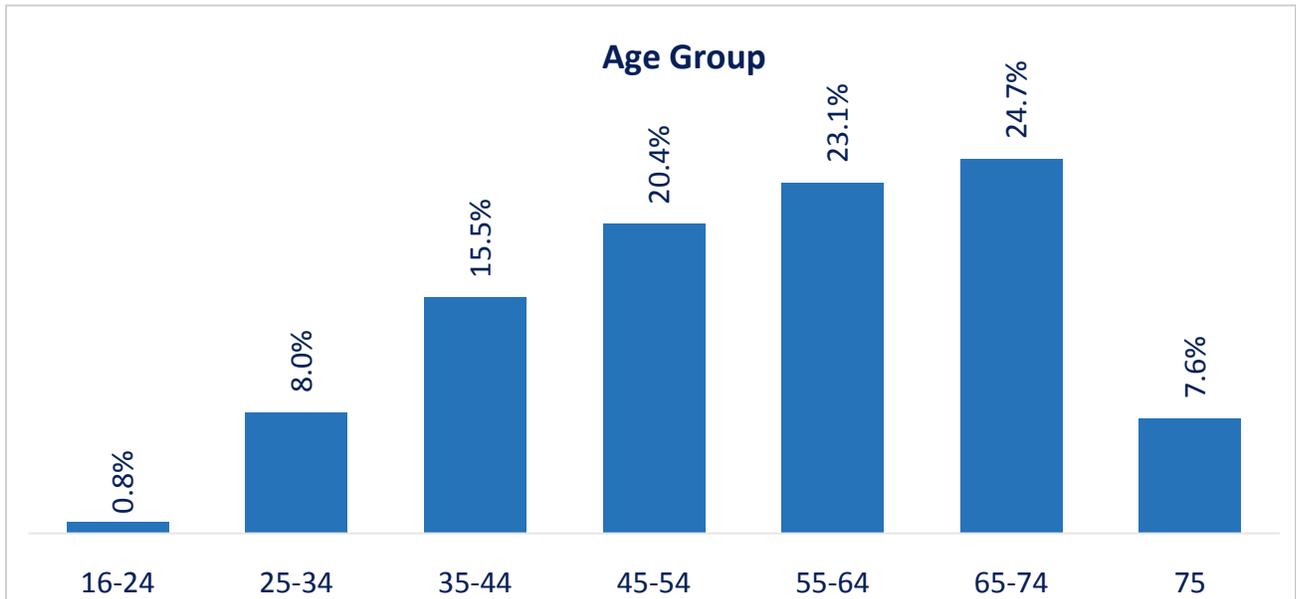


Chart 3: Age group of respondents

93.4% of respondents were white British, with only 14 (2.7%) respondents were of a non-white or other ethnicity.

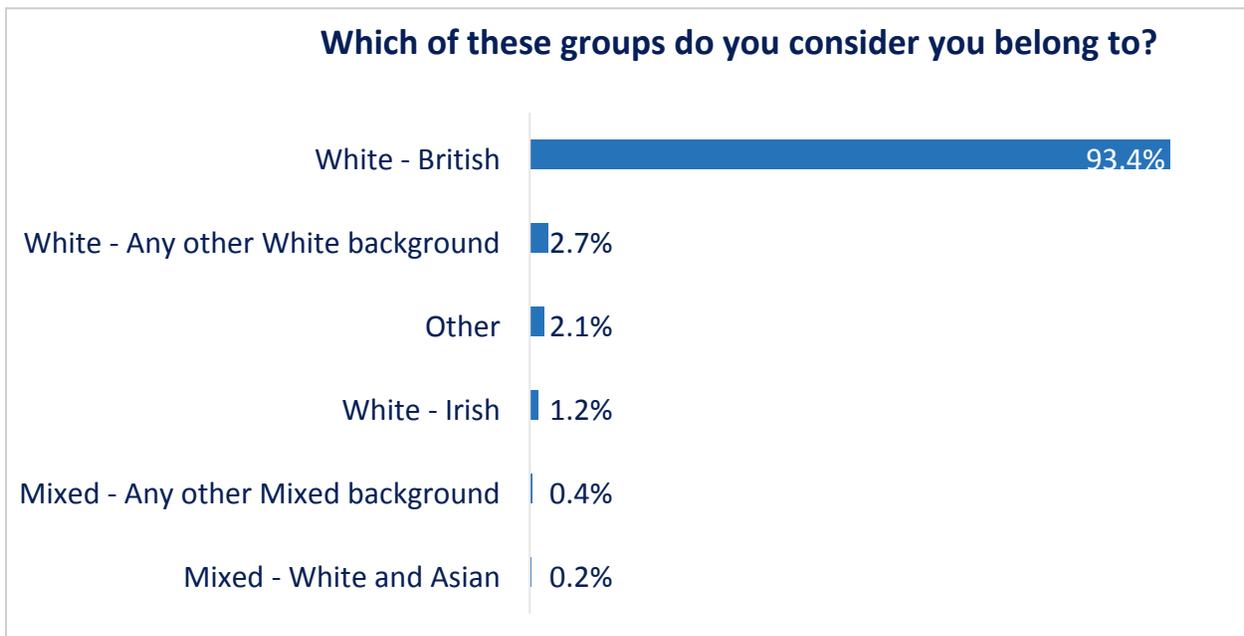


Chart 4: Ethnicity of respondents

81.6% of respondents were heterosexual, 3.6% were gay/ lesbian, 1.4% bisexual and 13.5% preferred not to say.



Chart 30: Sexual orientation of respondents

4.2 Have your say - Site Traffic

Reviewing the site activity, visits, and how people visit the site can be useful to evaluate if people are aware of the site, as well as to ensure engagement activities are deployed effectively, and to a wide range of different people – enhancing public engagement in the future.

Site registration allows us to confirm the number of engaged participants through the completion of the questionnaire or ideas board; 530 people completed the survey and 78 people contributed 112 ideas to the board.

2,710 visited the Budget Consultation page of the Have Your Say site, of these 182 downloaded a document, 530 people completed the survey and 78 people contributed 112 ideas to the board.

These figures cannot be viewed as definitive as they are based on site tracking through ‘cookies’ and there are a number of factors that can impact on this. These include that cookies may be disabled or deleted, individuals may access the site multiple times through different devices or different browsers. However, the figures can be used to gauge how much interest has been generated in individual projects through the rate of engaged participants.

The route that people access the site is known as the traffic source. The ‘Have your say’ portal allows analysis to be carried out on traffic source, and if they lead to engagement in the site tools such as the questionnaire. This analysis allows a greater understanding of which communication and promotional tools to use to optimise engagement.

For this project a range of traffic sources have been reviewed and summarised in the table below. Most visits to the site were direct visits (2,006 visits) where people have either pasted or typed the URL in to their browser; these generated high rate of engagement with 32.5% of visits resulting in completion of the survey and/or ideas board.

Compared to this, whilst social media accounted for the second highest volume of traffic (1,120 visits) it generated the lowest rate of engagement - 11.8%.

| TRAFFIC CHANNEL | AWARE VISITS | INFORMED VISITS (%) | ENGAGED VISITS (%) |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| DIRECT | 2,006 | 70.0% | 32.5% |
| SOCIAL MEDIA | 1,120 | 61.3% | 11.8% |
| EMAIL | 199 | 63.3% | 15.6% |
| SEARCH ENGINE | 135 | 57.0% | 19.3% |
| REFERRALS | 67 | 67.2% | 14.9% |
| .GOV SITES | 9 | 66.7% | 33.3% |

Table 8: Site traffic sources

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Q1 Which council services do you value the most? data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Adult Social Care | | | | |
| One | 209 | 4 | 213 | 40.0% |
| Two | 98 | | 98 | 18.4% |
| Three | 88 | | 88 | 16.5% |
| Four | 54 | | 54 | 10.2% |
| Five | 79 | | 79 | 14.8% |
| Total | 528 | 4 | 532 | 100.0% |
| Children's Service | | | | |
| One | 242 | 3 | 245 | 46.1% |
| Two | 82 | | 82 | 15.4% |
| Three | 72 | 1 | 73 | 13.7% |
| Four | 43 | | 43 | 8.1% |
| Five | 88 | | 88 | 16.6% |
| Total | 527 | 4 | 531 | 100.0% |
| Bins and Recycling | | | | |
| One | 207 | 2 | 209 | 39.3% |
| Two | 134 | 2 | 136 | 25.6% |
| Three | 92 | | 92 | 17.3% |
| Four | 47 | | 47 | 8.8% |
| Five | 48 | | 48 | 9.0% |
| Total | 528 | 4 | 532 | 100.0% |
| Affordable Housing | | | | |
| One | 90 | 3 | 93 | 17.6% |
| Two | 101 | 1 | 102 | 19.3% |
| Three | 147 | | 147 | 27.8% |
| Four | 91 | | 91 | 17.2% |
| Five | 96 | | 96 | 18.1% |
| Total | 525 | 4 | 529 | 100.0% |
| Highways and Roads | | | | |
| One | 152 | | 152 | 28.9% |
| Two | 144 | 3 | 147 | 27.9% |
| Three | 131 | 1 | 132 | 25.1% |
| Four | 53 | | 53 | 10.1% |
| Five | 42 | | 42 | 8.0% |
| Total | 522 | 4 | 526 | 100.0% |
| Climate Emergency | | | | |
| One | 154 | 1 | 155 | 29.2% |

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Two | 87 | 1 | 88 | 16.6% |
| Three | 120 | 2 | 122 | 23.0% |
| Four | 75 | | 75 | 14.2% |
| Five | 90 | | 90 | 17.0% |
| Total | 526 | 4 | 530 | 100.0% |
| Community Safety (Including Antisocial Behaviour) | | | | |
| One | 197 | 3 | 200 | 37.8% |
| Two | 128 | 1 | 129 | 24.4% |
| Three | 97 | | 97 | 18.3% |
| Four | 59 | | 59 | 11.2% |
| Five | 44 | | 44 | 8.3% |
| Total | 525 | 4 | 529 | 100.0% |
| Rough Sleeping and Homelessness | | | | |
| One | 122 | 2 | 124 | 23.4% |
| Two | 107 | 1 | 108 | 20.4% |
| Three | 142 | 1 | 143 | 27.0% |
| Four | 81 | | 81 | 15.3% |
| Five | 74 | | 74 | 14.0% |
| Total | 526 | 4 | 530 | 100.0% |
| Regeneration (Including Economic Growth and Job Creation) | | | | |
| One | 108 | | 108 | 20.5% |
| Two | 158 | 2 | 160 | 30.3% |
| Three | 124 | 1 | 125 | 23.7% |
| Four | 86 | | 86 | 16.3% |
| Five | 48 | 1 | 49 | 9.3% |
| Total | 524 | 4 | 528 | 100.0% |
| Public Health (Including addressing Health Inequalities) | | | | |
| One | 146 | 3 | 149 | 28.3% |
| Two | 134 | 1 | 135 | 25.6% |
| Three | 119 | | 119 | 22.6% |
| Four | 74 | | 74 | 14.0% |
| Five | 50 | | 50 | 9.5% |
| Total | 523 | 4 | 527 | 100.0% |
| Environmental Health | | | | |
| One | 128 | 1 | 129 | 24.5% |
| Two | 155 | 3 | 158 | 30.0% |
| Three | 140 | | 140 | 26.6% |
| Four | 60 | | 60 | 11.4% |
| Five | 39 | | 39 | 7.4% |
| Total | 522 | 4 | 526 | 100.0% |
| Leisure Services (Including Leisure Centres and Golf Courses) | | | | |

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| One | 139 | 1 | 140 | 26.6% |
| Two | 118 | 2 | 120 | 22.8% |
| Three | 126 | | 126 | 23.9% |
| Four | 65 | | 65 | 12.3% |
| Five | 75 | 1 | 76 | 14.4% |
| Total | 523 | 4 | 527 | 100.0% |
| Museums | | | | |
| One | 85 | 1 | 86 | 16.3% |
| Two | 116 | 1 | 117 | 22.2% |
| Three | 161 | 1 | 162 | 30.7% |
| Four | 94 | | 94 | 17.8% |
| Five | 68 | 1 | 69 | 13.1% |
| Total | 524 | 4 | 528 | 100.0% |
| Parks and Open Spaces | | | | |
| One | 223 | 2 | 225 | 42.5% |
| Two | 122 | 1 | 123 | 23.3% |
| Three | 74 | | 74 | 14.0% |
| Four | 55 | | 55 | 10.4% |
| Five | 51 | 1 | 52 | 9.8% |
| Total | 525 | 4 | 529 | 100.0% |

Q2 Which Services do the council need to invest more resources in data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Adult Social Care (including Domestic Abuse, Safeguarding and Independent Living) | | | | |
| One | 141 | 4 | 145 | 36.3% |
| Two | 78 | | 78 | 19.5% |
| Three | 73 | | 73 | 18.3% |
| Four | 43 | | 43 | 10.8% |
| Five | 61 | | 61 | 15.3% |
| Total | 396 | 4 | 400 | 100.0% |
| Children's Services (Including Education, Safeguarding, Early Help and SEND) | | | | |
| One | 153 | 3 | 156 | 39.2% |
| Two | 72 | | 72 | 18.1% |
| Three | 72 | 1 | 73 | 18.3% |
| Four | 37 | | 37 | 9.3% |
| Five | 60 | | 60 | 15.1% |
| Total | 394 | 4 | 398 | 100.0% |
| Bins and Recycling | | | | |
| One | 93 | 2 | 95 | 25.1% |
| Two | 80 | 2 | 82 | 21.7% |

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Three | 118 | | 118 | 31.2% |
| Four | 48 | | 48 | 12.7% |
| Five | 35 | | 35 | 9.3% |
| Total | 374 | 4 | 378 | 100.0% |
| Affordable Housing | | | | |
| One | 72 | 2 | 74 | 19.9% |
| Two | 62 | 1 | 63 | 17.0% |
| Three | 94 | 1 | 95 | 25.6% |
| Four | 56 | | 56 | 15.1% |
| Five | 83 | | 83 | 22.4% |
| Total | 367 | 4 | 371 | 100.0% |
| Highways and Roads (Including Streetlights, Parking and Street Cleaning) | | | | |
| One | 108 | 3 | 111 | 28.5% |
| Two | 89 | 1 | 90 | 23.1% |
| Three | 106 | | 106 | 27.2% |
| Four | 45 | | 45 | 11.6% |
| Five | 37 | | 37 | 9.5% |
| Total | 385 | 4 | 389 | 100.0% |
| Climate Emergency | | | | |
| One | 113 | 1 | 114 | 29.8% |
| Two | 61 | 1 | 62 | 16.2% |
| Three | 80 | 2 | 82 | 21.4% |
| Four | 52 | | 52 | 13.6% |
| Five | 73 | | 73 | 19.1% |
| Total | 379 | 4 | 383 | 100.0% |
| Community Safety (Including Antisocial Behaviour) | | | | |
| One | 131 | 3 | 134 | 34.8% |
| Two | 95 | 1 | 96 | 24.9% |
| Three | 90 | | 90 | 23.4% |
| Four | 38 | | 38 | 9.9% |
| Five | 27 | | 27 | 7.0% |
| Total | 381 | 4 | 385 | 100.0% |
| Rough Sleeping and Homelessness | | | | |
| One | 93 | 3 | 96 | 25.5% |
| Two | 75 | | 75 | 19.9% |
| Three | 99 | 1 | 100 | 26.6% |
| Four | 35 | | 35 | 9.3% |
| Five | 70 | | 70 | 18.6% |
| Total | 372 | 4 | 376 | 100.0% |
| Regeneration (Including Economic Growth and Job Creation) | | | | |
| One | 91 | | 91 | 23.9% |

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Two | 84 | 2 | 86 | 22.6% |
| Three | 97 | 1 | 98 | 25.8% |
| Four | 51 | | 51 | 13.4% |
| Five | 53 | 1 | 54 | 14.2% |
| Total | 376 | 4 | 380 | 100.0% |
| Public Health (Including addressing Health Inequalities) | | | | |
| One | 95 | 3 | 98 | 26.1% |
| Two | 78 | 1 | 79 | 21.0% |
| Three | 106 | | 106 | 28.2% |
| Four | 49 | | 49 | 13.0% |
| Five | 44 | | 44 | 11.7% |
| Total | 372 | 4 | 376 | 100.0% |
| Environmental Health | | | | |
| One | 86 | 1 | 87 | 23.2% |
| Two | 93 | 3 | 96 | 25.6% |
| Three | 112 | | 112 | 29.9% |
| Four | 46 | | 46 | 12.3% |
| Five | 34 | | 34 | 9.1% |
| Total | 371 | 4 | 375 | 100.0% |
| Leisure Services (Including Leisure Centres and Golf Courses) | | | | |
| One | 107 | 1 | 108 | 28.1% |
| Two | 83 | 2 | 85 | 22.1% |
| Three | 74 | | 74 | 19.2% |
| Four | 46 | | 46 | 11.9% |
| Five | 71 | 1 | 72 | 18.7% |
| Total | 381 | 4 | 385 | 100.0% |
| Museums | | | | |
| One | 67 | 1 | 68 | 18.3% |
| Two | 72 | 2 | 74 | 19.9% |
| Three | 113 | | 113 | 30.4% |
| Four | 49 | | 49 | 13.2% |
| Five | 67 | 1 | 68 | 18.3% |
| Total | 368 | 4 | 372 | 100.0% |
| Parks and Open Spaces | | | | |
| One | 153 | 2 | 155 | 39.0% |
| Two | 87 | 1 | 88 | 22.2% |
| Three | 82 | | 82 | 20.7% |
| Four | 28 | | 28 | 7.1% |
| Five | 43 | 1 | 44 | 11.1% |
| Total | 393 | 4 | 397 | 100.0% |

Q3 How important are these priorities? - data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| A Sustainable Environment – e.g., tackling climate crisis | | | | |
| One | 165 | 2 | 167 | 31.3% |
| Two | 104 | 1 | 105 | 19.7% |
| Three | 129 | 1 | 130 | 24.4% |
| Four | 61 | | 61 | 11.4% |
| Five | 70 | | 70 | 13.1% |
| Total | 529 | 4 | 533 | 100.0% |
| Brighter Futures – e.g., helping children and families | | | | |
| One | 163 | 3 | 166 | 31.4% |
| Two | 146 | | 146 | 27.7% |
| Three | 97 | 1 | 98 | 18.6% |
| Four | 61 | | 61 | 11.6% |
| Five | 57 | | 57 | 10.8% |
| Total | 524 | 4 | 528 | 100.0% |
| An Inclusive Economy – e.g., supporting jobs and businesses | | | | |
| One | 106 | 2 | 108 | 20.4% |
| Two | 165 | 2 | 167 | 31.5% |
| Three | 149 | | 149 | 28.1% |
| Four | 62 | | 62 | 11.7% |
| Five | 44 | | 44 | 8.3% |
| Total | 526 | 4 | 530 | 100.0% |
| Safe and Pleasant Communities – e.g., being safe where we live | | | | |
| One | 241 | 3 | 244 | 46.2% |
| Two | 131 | 1 | 132 | 25.0% |
| Three | 69 | | 69 | 13.1% |
| Four | 32 | | 32 | 6.1% |
| Five | 51 | | 51 | 9.7% |
| Total | 524 | 4 | 528 | 100.0% |
| Active and Healthy Lives – e.g., helping people live independently | | | | |
| One | 166 | 3 | 169 | 31.8% |
| Two | 136 | 1 | 137 | 25.8% |
| Three | 120 | | 120 | 22.6% |
| Four | 53 | | 53 | 10.0% |
| Five | 52 | | 52 | 9.8% |
| Total | 527 | 4 | 531 | 100.0% |

Q4 Sustainable Environment data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Continue to respond to the climate emergency | | | | |
| One | 174 | 1 | 175 | 33.0% |
| Two | 105 | 1 | 106 | 20.0% |
| Three | 118 | 1 | 119 | 22.5% |
| Four | 51 | | 51 | 9.6% |
| Five | 79 | | 79 | 14.9% |
| Total | 527 | 3 | 530 | 100.0% |
| Protection of our local environment | | | | |
| One | 220 | 1 | 221 | 41.8% |
| Two | 140 | 2 | 142 | 26.8% |
| Three | 83 | | 83 | 15.7% |
| Four | 42 | | 42 | 7.9% |
| Five | 41 | | 41 | 7.8% |
| Total | 526 | 3 | 529 | 100.0% |
| Keep working to improve street cleanliness | | | | |
| One | 169 | 2 | 171 | 32.5% |
| Two | 166 | 1 | 167 | 31.7% |
| Three | 105 | | 105 | 20.0% |
| Four | 50 | | 50 | 9.5% |
| Five | 33 | | 33 | 6.3% |
| Total | 523 | 3 | 526 | 100.0% |
| Support increased use of active travel (walking and cycling) networks | | | | |
| One | 128 | 1 | 129 | 24.3% |
| Two | 117 | 1 | 118 | 22.3% |
| Three | 137 | 1 | 138 | 26.0% |
| Four | 75 | | 75 | 14.2% |
| Five | 70 | | 70 | 13.2% |
| Total | 527 | 3 | 530 | 100.0% |

Q5 Stronger & brighter futures data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Continue to ensure our children and young people become the best adults they can be | | | | |
| One | 235 | 1 | 236 | 45.0% |
| Two | 101 | 1 | 102 | 19.5% |
| Three | 82 | 1 | 83 | 15.8% |
| Four | 39 | | 39 | 7.4% |
| Five | 64 | | 64 | 12.2% |
| Total | 521 | 3 | 524 | 100.0% |
| Ensure our children and young people have equal access to educational opportunities | | | | |
| One | 245 | 2 | 247 | 47.0% |
| Two | 104 | 1 | 105 | 20.0% |
| Three | 72 | | 72 | 13.7% |
| Four | 34 | | 34 | 6.5% |
| Five | 67 | | 67 | 12.8% |
| Total | 522 | 3 | 525 | 100.0% |
| Take every opportunity to raise the aspirations of all our children and young people | | | | |
| One | 229 | 2 | 231 | 44.2% |
| Two | 105 | 1 | 106 | 20.3% |
| Three | 89 | | 89 | 17.0% |
| Four | 36 | | 36 | 6.9% |
| Five | 61 | | 61 | 11.7% |
| Total | 520 | 3 | 523 | 100.0% |

Q6 Inclusive Economy data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Creating community wealth and social value | | | | |
| One | 124 | 1 | 125 | 23.9% |
| Two | 156 | 2 | 158 | 30.2% |
| Three | 128 | | 128 | 24.4% |
| Four | 65 | | 65 | 12.4% |
| Five | 48 | | 48 | 9.2% |
| Total | 521 | 3 | 524 | 100.0% |
| Supporting local businesses and job creation | | | | |
| One | 150 | 1 | 151 | 28.7% |
| Two | 157 | 2 | 159 | 30.2% |
| Three | 118 | | 118 | 22.4% |
| Four | 61 | | 61 | 11.6% |
| Five | 37 | | 37 | 7.0% |
| Total | 523 | 3 | 526 | 100.0% |
| Developing quality, affordable sustainable homes | | | | |
| One | 118 | 2 | 120 | 22.9% |
| Two | 106 | 1 | 107 | 20.4% |
| Three | 142 | | 142 | 27.0% |
| Four | 84 | | 84 | 16.0% |
| Five | 72 | | 72 | 13.7% |
| Total | 522 | 3 | 525 | 100.0% |
| Delivering regeneration, transport, and growth ambitions | | | | |
| One | 133 | 1 | 134 | 25.4% |
| Two | 141 | 2 | 143 | 27.1% |
| Three | 149 | | 149 | 28.3% |
| Four | 56 | | 56 | 10.6% |
| Five | 45 | | 45 | 8.5% |
| Total | 524 | 3 | 527 | 100.0% |

Q7 Safe & Pleasant Communities data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Working with partner agencies to reduce crime and tackle anti-social behaviour | | | | |
| One | 275 | 2 | 277 | 52.3% |
| Two | 108 | 1 | 109 | 20.6% |
| Three | 59 | | 59 | 11.1% |
| Four | 34 | | 34 | 6.4% |
| Five | 51 | | 51 | 9.6% |
| Total | 527 | 3 | 530 | 100.0% |
| Tackling rough sleeping and homelessness | | | | |
| One | 152 | 2 | 154 | 29.2% |
| Two | 119 | | 119 | 22.5% |
| Three | 124 | 1 | 125 | 23.7% |
| Four | 65 | | 65 | 12.3% |
| Five | 65 | | 65 | 12.3% |
| Total | 525 | 3 | 528 | 100.0% |
| Delivering everyday neighbourhoods services to the best possible standard | | | | |
| One | 199 | 1 | 200 | 38.0% |
| Two | 155 | 2 | 157 | 29.8% |
| Three | 92 | | 92 | 17.5% |
| Four | 34 | | 34 | 6.5% |
| Five | 44 | | 44 | 8.3% |
| Total | 524 | 3 | 527 | 100.0% |

Q8 Active and Healthy Lives data table

| Importance | Online responses | Paper responses | Total responses | Percent |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Working collaboratively with our partner agencies to improve mental wellbeing | | | | |
| One | 179 | 3 | 182 | 34.6% |
| Two | 144 | 1 | 145 | 27.6% |
| Three | 97 | | 97 | 18.4% |
| Four | 44 | | 44 | 8.4% |
| Five | 62 | | 62 | 11.8% |
| Total | 526 | | 526 | 100.0% |
| Encouragement and help with active living | | | | |
| One | 137 | 2 | 139 | 26.3% |
| Two | 162 | 1 | 163 | 30.8% |
| Three | 127 | | 127 | 24.0% |
| Four | 57 | 1 | 58 | 11.0% |
| Five | 42 | | 42 | 7.9% |
| Total | 525 | 4 | 529 | 100.0% |
| Supporting people to live independently | | | | |
| One | 158 | 3 | 161 | 30.5% |
| Two | 150 | 1 | 151 | 28.6% |
| Three | 123 | | 123 | 23.3% |
| Four | 50 | | 50 | 9.5% |
| Five | 43 | | 43 | 8.1% |
| Total | 524 | 4 | 528 | 100.0% |
| Deliver Public Health services to help people live healthy lifestyles | | | | |
| One | 148 | 4 | 152 | 28.7% |
| Two | 152 | | 152 | 28.7% |
| Three | 120 | | 120 | 22.6% |
| Four | 67 | | 67 | 12.6% |
| Five | 39 | | 39 | 7.4% |
| Total | 526 | 4 | 530 | 100.0% |
| Tackle health inequalities | | | | |
| One | 161 | 4 | 165 | 31.4% |
| Two | 116 | | 116 | 22.1% |
| Three | 126 | | 126 | 24.0% |
| Four | 68 | | 68 | 12.9% |
| Five | 51 | | 51 | 9.7% |
| Total | 522 | 4 | 526 | 100.0% |



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MONDAY 31 JANUARY 2022

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| REPORT TITLE: | CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILY AND EDUCATION |

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

Members are invited to note and comment on the proposed Children, Young People and Education Committee work programme for the 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 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;

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 its 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.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Polly Price**
Senior Democratic Services Officer
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email: pollyprice@wirral.gov.uk

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 |
|-----------------|------|
| | |

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

KEY DECISION ITEMS

| Item | Approximate timescale | Lead Departmental Officer |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Strategy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers | March 2022 | Hannah Myers |
| Pupil Place Planning Strategy | March 2022 | Hannah Myers |
| PFI Update Kingsway Proposal | March 2022 | James Backhouse |

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED

| Item | Approximate timescale | Lead Departmental Officer |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Lifelong Learning Update | TBC | Paul Smith |
| Child Exploitation | TBC | Elizabeth Hartley |
| Covid-19 Education Catch Up Plan | TBC | James Backhouse |
| School Improvement Strategy Update | March 2022 | James Backhouse |
| Summary of Standards | From September 22 | James Backhouse |
| Social Work Workforce Absence | TBC | Simone White |
| Capital Programme | TBC | |
| Learning from Covid and targeting resources with regards to social inequalities | TBC | Simone White |

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

| Item | Reporting Frequency | Lead Departmental Officer |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| Performance and Financial Monitoring Report | Quarterly | Tricia Thomas |
| Children's Committee Work Programme Update | Each Meeting | Committee Team |
| Summary of Standards | September 22 | James Backhouse |
| Corporate Parenting Panel Update | November/ June | Hannah Myers |
| Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report | Every Jan | David Robbins |
| Safeguarding Fostering and Adoption | Annually (first meeting of the municipal year) | |
| Lifelong Learning Annual Performance report | Every Sept | Paul Smith |
| Admission Arrangements | Every Jan | Sally Gibbs |

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 | |
| Child Poverty Strategy | Workshop | TBC | Simone White | |
| Youth Justice Review Outcomes | Workshop | November 21 | Elizabeth Hartley | |
| Integrated front door/ Police visits etc | Visit | TBC | Simone White | |
| School Budget Update – inc traded services | Workshop | TBC | Simone White | |
| PFI Options (Kingsway) – Chair and Spokes | Presentation | TBC | Hannah Myers | |
| Capital Programme – to be integrated within budget workshop | | | | |
| Visits to Social workers | Visit | TBC | | |
| Task and Finish Reviews | | | | |

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

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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