

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 July 2022

Present:

Councillors	K Hodson(Chair)	D Kenny
	C Carubia	S Powell-Wilde
	H Collinson	V Wilson
	C Povall	A Wright
	S Bennett	M Jackson
	E Gleaves	

15 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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

16 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

17 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest.

Councillor Sue Powell Wilde declared a personal interest in respect of item 8 by virtue of her position as a foster carer in Wirral through a fostering private agency and her spouse's employment as a social worker.

18 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 22 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

19 PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that one public question had been received that was read out regarding the inefficiencies of fluorescent tubes for lighting :

The question asked was as follows:

Is it possible to put a stand alone procedure in place to fast-track the replacement of fluorescent lighting in order to reap both monetary and environmental benefits sooner than the current system allows?"

Members were advised that the question had also been put to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee and as the question was cross cutting, a coordinated response would be arranged and completed between children's and environment officers.

20 **COVID 19 EDUCATION CATCH UP PLAN / LEARNING FROM COVID AND TARGETING RESOURCES WITH REGARDS TO SOCIAL INEQUALITIES**

A report by the Director for Children, Families and Education, presented by the Assistant Director for Education advised how the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on education and young people across Wirral and gave a summary of the steps different areas of the Local Authority had taken to support schools, families, and young people to enable them to recover from the missed education that had occurred due to the lockdown periods over the last two years.

By way of background, the report reminded Members how schools and settings nationally closed in March 2020 due the first lockdown of the COVID - 19 pandemic and gradually returned Spring 2021. Members were further reminded how during 2020 and 2021, no formal assessments had taken place.

The report advised how as a Local Authority, significant support had been offered during the COVID-19 pandemic to support schools and settings to operate in the most effective way and providing clarity in relation to changing guidance. The report acknowledged how the true impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education outcomes and the well-being for young people would take years to become clear. The report set out the methods to which they assisted in supporting schools most notably through early years support, the winter household support fund, educational support, attendance service support as well as public health and the 0-19 school nursing service.

In response to a question by a Member it was identified that take up of early years funding had decreased and committee members were advised that reasons for this would be thoroughly investigated. Furthermore, it was also identified how take up of apprenticeships had also declined.

Clarification was sought by Members on how attendance figures were recorded and the range of procedures were explained for when the attendance service would intervene. Further clarification was sought over academy schools and members were advised how safeguarding responsibilities remain with the Local Authority and that the Ofsted regulator has the ability to choose to inspect both academy and community schools.

With regards to apprenticeship schemes, Members were informed that Wirral Local Authority continue to support an apprenticeship scheme and there had been some good success stories.

Resolved – That the report be noted and the contribution to support the lives of young people and Wirral’s schools as the education system recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic be recognised.

21 **OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE ADULT EDUCATION DELIVERY 2020-21**

A report by the Director for Children, Families and Education, presented by the Head of Service for Integrated Learning, Skills and Employment set out the service’s developments, summary of delivery and learning achievements in the 2020/21 academic year.

Members were advised how Wirral Council’s Lifelong Learning Service had actively engaged and supported local residents (Aged 19 +). Members heard how this grant funded council service continued to support the most disadvantaged, and had worked upon difficult issues using innovative approaches for example, supporting community cohesion, troubled families, Children’s Centres, family learning, refugees and improving mental health through learning.

The report advised how the 2020/21 academic year had proved to be challenging for the service with mixed models of course delivery being required including online when face to face was not practical due to lock down restrictions. The report informed Members how the service had expanded in 2020/21 and had subcontracted key provision to a range of providers, mostly in the third sector. Members heard how projects focused on four main themes: pre employability skills, volunteering and qualifications; mental health and wellbeing; environmental, horticulture and working outdoors and; family and parents.

In response to a question by a Member, the committee was advised how data was carried of attendees gaining employment and a number of case studies had been gathered and shared.

In response to a further question, Members were advised that the combined authority ‘Test and Learn’ pilot had proved to be successful as a means to improve methods of addressing skills needs more effectively in the Liverpool City Region.

With regards to family learning, it was explained how the uptake for this service is low and engagement is predominantly through primary schools. It

was explained how despite the low intake, there has been an increase in integrating the family learning approach.

Resolved – That

(1) the report be noted.

(2) the Lifelong Learning Services' planned improvements be supported and the contribution to improving the lives of adults in Wirral's more deprived communities during 2020/21 be recognised.

22 **NATIONAL CARE REVIEW**

A report by the Director of Children, Families and Education provided an overview of the National Care Review including its findings, implications and perceived readiness of Children's Services to respond. Appended to the report was the National Care Review that was launched in March 2021, led by Josh McCallister as per the commitment in the 2019 Government's manifesto to review the children's social care system. The final report was published on 23 May 22 and key findings were summarised within the report.

The Director for Children, Families and Education advised members of the Committee how Wirral Council had already been working in line with some of the recommendations within the report and would continue to do so alongside reviewing and implementing further recommendations.

In response to a question regarding resetting social care, it was explained how currently social workers were trained in all aspects in social care and do not specialise as recommended within the National Care Review. Members heard how this approach would be explored.

Members heard how major changes to legislation with regards to Children's Social Care would be implemented in 2024.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

23 **SECTION B: WORK PROGRAMME/ OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Head of Legal Services outlined the report detailing the work programme for the Children, Young People and Education Committee for the municipal year

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.

