



## Children, Young People & Education Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday, 24 January 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6.00 p.m.</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall</b>

**Contact Officer:** Victoria Simpson  
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Please note that public seating is limited, therefore members of the public are encouraged to arrive in good time.

Wirral Council is fully committed to equalities and our obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. If you have any adjustments that would help you attend or participate at this meeting, please let us know as soon as possible and we would be happy to facilitate where possible. Please contact [committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk)

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

## AGENDA

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

**2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held 6 December 22.

**3. APOLOGIES**

**4. 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.

## **5. PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

### **5.1 Public Questions**

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 Noon, Thursday 19 January 2023 to the Council's Monitoring Officer (via the online form here: [Public Question Form](#)) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question by the deadline for submission.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link: [Document Data Protection Protocol](#)

### **5.2 Statements and Petitions**

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Thursday 19 January 2023 to the Council's Monitoring Officer ([committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk)) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.

Petitions may be presented to the Council if provided to Democratic and Member Services no later than 10 working days before the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding three 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. If a petition contains more than 5,000 signatures, it will be debated at a subsequent meeting of Council for up to 15 minutes, at the discretion of the Mayor.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your statement/petition by the deadline for submission.

### **5.3 Member's Questions**

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

## **SECTION A - DECISIONS**

### **6. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY**

**SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR  
2024-25 (Pages 9 - 66)**

**SECTION B - BUDGET REPORTS**

- 7. BUDGET WORKSHOP OUTCOMES (Pages 67 - 110)**

**SECTION C - PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

- 8. SUMMARY OF STANDARDS (UPDATED) – PROVISIONAL  
OUTCOMES FOR KEY STAGE 4 (Pages 111 - 140)**

**SECTION D - WORK PROGRAMME / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

- 9. SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025 (Pages 141 -  
150)**

- 10. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 151 - 158)**

- 11. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND  
PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

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

- 12. BUDGET WORKSHOP APPENDICES (Pages 159 - 166)**

**Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference for this committee can be found at the end of this agenda.

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## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 6 December 2022

Present:

Councillor K Hodson (Chair)

Councillors	C Cooke	S Bennett
	C Carubia	E Gleaves
	H Collinson	D Kenny
	C Poval	V Wilson

Apologies

Councillors S Powell Wilde  
A Wright  
M Jackson  
(Diocesan rep)

35 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting as well as those watching the webcast.

36 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sue Powell Wilde, Councillor Alison Wright and Margaret Jackson .

37 **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 Collinson declared a prejudicial interest in respect of items 6 and 7 by virtue of her involvement with the Unity Federation and membership on Wirral Development Trust.

38 **PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

The Chair reported that there were no public questions, statements, petitions or questions by members.

39 **MINUTES**

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October be approved as a correct record**

40 **CONSULTATION OUTCOME LEASOWE AGE RANGE**

Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in respect of this agenda item, Councillor Collinson left the room during consideration of this matter.

The Principal Officer for School Admissions, Place and Planning introduced the report of the Director of Children, Young People and Education which provided the outcome of a consultation on a proposal to alter the age range of Leasowe Primary School to establish a maintained nursery class and sought approval to alter the age range of the school by one year group from 4 to 11, to 3 to 11.

The report advised that a consultation was held between 5<sup>th</sup> October 22 and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 22 and that no objections were received during this period. The report further advised how adopting the proposal would mean that all three primary schools within the identified planning area would offer on-site nursery provision. The report also identified and explained the benefits of operating a nursery class as part of the school and advised members that additional costs could be met from the existing budget of Leasowe Primary School.

In response to a question by a Member it was explained how at present the school had temporarily opened up an F1 (pre school) class in order to meet demand and it was further explained how the uptake of 3 year old provision in this planning area was reported to be lower than other parts of Wirral. Members were assured that ongoing work is being undertaken with Council Education Officers and Early Years Providers in order to address disparity in take up of 3 year old placements.

A member sought reassurance that the consultation had been carried out effectively and legally and was assured that it had been.

**Resolved – That**

**(1) the proposal to alter the age range of Leasowe Primary School by one year group from 4 to 11, to 3 to 11, as a prescribed alteration to a maintained school be approved; and**

**(2) the Director of Children, Families and Education be granted all necessary authority to implement the proposal.**

41 **CONSULTATION OUTCOME OBSERVATORY SCHOOL**

Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in respect of this agenda item, Councillor Collinson left the room during consideration of this matter.

The Principal Officer for School Admissions, Place and Planning introduced the report of the Director of Children, Family and Education which provided the outcome of a consultation on proposals for prescribed alterations to The Observatory School. The report advised how The Observatory School is a mixed age 11 to 16 community special school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It was explained how the proposals listed within the report relate to making permanent a trial scheme providing places to primary school age pupils, increasing the number of places offered by the school and also an expansion onto a satellite site in the Leasowe area.

Members were advised how a public notice setting out the three prescribed alterations was published on 5<sup>th</sup> October 22 followed by a 4 week representation period to which no objections were received.

In response to a query, members were advised that the Assistant Director for Education would work closely with the school to address provision with regards to staffing. Furthermore with regards to staff moving from site to site, members were advised that the school are working with existing staff regarding any new working arrangements.

On a motion by Councillor Carubia and seconded by Councillor Povall it was:

**Resolved – That**

- (1) the change to the lower age limit of The Observatory School from 11 to 8 be approved;**
- (2) the permanent change of the number of places at The Observatory School to 100 be approved;**
- (3) the expansion of The Observatory School onto a satellite site be located at the former Leasowe Early Years Centre be approved; and**
- (4) the Director of Children, Families and Education be granted all necessary authority to implement the proposals**

42 **2022-23 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER TWO**

The Senior Business Partner introduced a report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2022-23 saving programme and a summary of reserves.

Members were advised how at the end of quarter 2, there was a forecast adverse position of £2.297m on the Committees net revenue budget of £79.234m. Members were further advised how there had been significant movements since the last report, largely due to 3 main issues:

- Forecast increased costs of £1.1m from the employers proposed pay award, over and above the original 3% built into the 2022-23 budget;
- SEND assisted travel contract, with inflation now estimated at over 30%
- Increased numbers of children in care, after a year of reducing numbers, particularly in young people placed in high -cost residential settings.

In response to a question, members were advised how due to the overspend in the high needs (SEND) block, the DfE have arranged for consultants to review what can be improved to become more cost effective. It was explained how in Wirral there is a higher than average proportion of children with SEND who are educated in a specialist setting rather than within a mainstream school. In response to a further question, members heard how the 'Transforming Care' project is projected to create savings when new properties are opened in the new year.

**Resolved – That**

- (1) the forecast revenue position presented at Quarter 2 be noted;**
- (2) the progress on delivery of the 2022-23 savings programme at Quarter 2 be noted;**
- (3) the forecast level of reserves at Quarter 2 be noted; and**
- (4) the forecast capital position presented at Quarter 2 be noted.**

43 **QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Performance and Improvement Manager for Children's Services introduced the report of the Director for Children, Young People and Education providing the latest performance information for Children's Services.

Of particular note, members heard how there had been an increase in numbers of looked after children in this quarter and the numbers of children adopted within this quarter had decreased. They were also informed that there is further work to do around improving health assessment compliance, with particular reference to there having been a significant dental check delay for some children.

Furthermore, in terms of education it was reported that attainment across all ranges had fallen at both national and Wirral level compared to 2019

outcomes and in relation to KS2 outcomes, the gap to national had widened to 7%, compared to the 2019 gap. It was reported how improvements have been made in EHCP timeframes and more children have been benefiting from the age 2 – 3 funding.

A query was raised regarding dental care for children and it was suggested that other options be considered for example the possibility of a community dentist at Arrowe Park.

An increase in domestic violence referrals was noted and a query was raised regarding this. In response, it was explained that the issue is complex and there has been legislative change that has led to the increase. The Assistant Director informed members that there has been ongoing preventative work with both perpetrators and victims.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

#### 44 **UPDATE ON WIRRAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2024**

The Assistant Director for Education introduced the report of the Director of Children, Family and Education that provided an update on the Wirral School Improvement Strategy 2021-2024.

Members were reminded that the strategy had been improved in September 2021. Progress to date was set out within the report under five themes; Leadership and Governance, High Support, High Challenge, Self – improving school system, learning and innovation and School Improvement Wirral. Progress was identified alongside each theme.

In response to a question it was reported that Ofsted inspections had been considered when devising the strategy and that 86% of schools in Wirral have received a rating of good or better.

**Resolved – That**

**(1) Progress made to date on delivering the School Improvement Strategy 2021-24 be endorsed; and**

**(2) the outlined plans to progress the strategy over the next two years be approved.**

#### 45 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN REPORT**

The Assistant Director of Education introduced the report of the Director of Children, Family and Education that had been referred to the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Constitution and Standards Committee following its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

The report provided members with an opportunity to review the Ombudsman's report and to agree to monitor the recommendations as part of its role in monitoring the SEND Improvement Programme and 'Wirral Statement of Action'. The report provided an overview into the nature of the complaint and updated the committee on progress on the recommendations. Overall, it was reported that failings had been linked to communication with the young person and family and measures are now in place to address this as detailed within the report.

In response to a question, it was reported that the backlog in EHCP's had improved and an intensive piece of work is being undertaken to ensure that annual reviews are being held.

**Resolved – That**

**(1) progress made to date on the recommendations as outlined be endorsed; and**

**(2) progress be monitored as part of the committees role in overseeing progress of the Wirral Statement of Action.**

46 **BREAKING THE CYCLE**

The Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention presented a report by the Director of Children, Family and Education that provided an update on the Breaking the Cycle programme. Members heard how there would be a further two reports presented to committee providing an overview of learning and impact and will provide direction to workforce remodelling activity. The report provided information on the 8 Breaking the Cycle projects and their impact. Furthermore, the report shared what had been learnt by participants about their experience.

Of particular note, the report advised how during the first year of delivery, Breaking the Cycle catalyst projects have provided co-ordinated support from a lead practitioner that had benefited 2,308 individuals, including 840 adults and 1468 children and young people. An analysis of the cohorts who had accessed support were detailed within the report.

Members provided positive feedback on the programme and offered their full support regarding the progression. Officers were thanked for their hard work and dedication.

**Resolved – That**

**(1) the development of services relating to the break the cycle programme be endorsed; and**

**(2) a further two learning reports be considered at future committee meetings.**

**47 UPDATE ON THE GOVERNMENT WHITE 'OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL; STRONG SCHOOLS WITH GREAT TEACHERS FOR YOUR CHILD'**

The report presented by the Assistant Director of Education presented a report by the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided an update on the content of the Government's White Paper on schools entitled 'Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child'. The report highlighted the key aspects of the white paper and the impact that this could have on the school system. The white paper was appended to the report.

In response to a question, members were advised how one of the key changes should the legislation be enacted would be that all schools will be an academy school by 2030. Members were further advised how a steering group consisting of headteachers of community maintained schools had been established to consider the implications.

A discussion then ensued regarding budgeting for both academies and maintained schools and members were appraised of the arrangements for both and the key difference being that a maintained school can set a deficit budget were as an academy cannot.

**Resolved – That the report be noted**

**48 FAMILY HUBS**

The Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention introduced a report by the Director of Children, Families and Education that provided an introduction to the Family Hubs programme. It was reported how Family Hubs provide the means by which Wirral Council can optimise a number of existing strategic priorities whilst providing an accessible, relevant and supportive offer to residents

The report advised how a family hub is a system wide model of providing high quality, joined up family support services that are delivered from conception through to the age of 19 ( or 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

Further details of the initiative were set out in the report and it was explained how each hub should be bespoke to the local community it serves and there are three key delivery principles underpinning the national concept – Access, Connection and Relationships.

**Resolved – That**

**(1) The report be noted; and**

**(2) a further update report be presented to the Children, Young People and Education Committee in six months**

49 **WORK PROGRAMME**

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

The Director of Children, Family and Education advised that a report would be presented to committee in March informing of the findings of the ongoing joint targeted inspection that is currently ongoing

**Resolved – That the work programme be noted.**

50 **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL MINUTES 12.10.22**

**Resolved – That the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel be noted.**



## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2024-25</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

This report invites the Children, Young People and Education Committee to determine the Council's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools and the co-ordinated schemes for 2024-2025. The Wirral Fair Access Protocol has also been amended to reflect feedback from Wirral schools and the 2021 Fair Access Guidance.

This affects all Wards within the Borough. The Wirral Plan 2021-26 priority "Brighter Futures" is supported by clear and objective admission arrangements in conjunction with a fit for purpose sufficiency strategy.

This is a key decision.

### RECOMMENDATION/S

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

- (1) the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and the Wirral co-ordinated schemes for 2024-2025 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.
- (2) The revised Wirral Fair Access Protocol as set out in Appendix 3 of this report.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Wirral Council as the Local Authority (“the Council” is required to determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools. The Council is also required to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2024-25. The proposed schemes are attached along with proposed admission numbers for community and controlled schools (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 1.2 The Council is required to have in place a Fair Access Protocol agreed with the majority of schools which ensures that there is a fair and balanced approach to admitting unplaced children, particularly those who are most vulnerable, outside the normal admissions round. The Wirral Fair Access Protocol has been developed in partnership with local schools. All admission authority schools must participate in order to ensure that children are allocated a place quickly. The criteria list of children included is set out in the Fair Access Protocol Guidance. The Protocol is reviewed annually; in 2021 the Protocol was updated to reflect amendments to the new Admissions Code 2021 and was in force from September 2021 accordingly.
- 1.3 Following from the 2021 amendments, schools have been asked to give feedback or comments on the Wirral Protocol which are reviewed in this report. The revised Protocol will be circulated to primary and secondary school headteachers in December 2022 and is expected to be agreed prior to Committee.

### 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The arrangements could remain unchanged, however, it is recommended that the variations detailed in section 3 to the Fair Access Protocol are made for the reasons set out in the report, as agreed by Wirral schools.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The **co-ordinated schemes for 2024-25** incorporate all prior published amendments. No significant changes have been made to the admission arrangements in the body of the schemes. The admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools are unchanged. Paragraph 3.5 of the schemes provides additional clarification regarding admission to single sex schools.
- 3.2 The Pupil Place Planning Review involves consideration of options for all schools - both community and own admission authority schools such as Academy and Voluntary Aided schools. Phase 1 concluded in Summer 2022. Phase 2 which includes schools in Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham, Spital and Thornton Hough, commenced in Autumn 2022.
- 3.3 From Phase 1, the governing body of Christ Church CE Primary School in Birkenhead has consulted on a reduction in Published Admission Number (PAN) from 37 to 30 which would come into effect from 2024/2025.

- 3.4 Outside of the phased Review, the governing body of Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School in Wallasey has consulted on a reduction in PAN from 45 to 30 which would come into effect from 2024/2025.
- 3.5 The **Wirral Fair Access Protocol** ensures that unplaced and vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible. All schools are expected to work together collaboratively and abide by the decisions of the Fair Access Panel. The Protocol is reviewed annually. Comments or feedback were invited from Wirral primary and secondary schools in by the end of November 2022.
- 3.6 Comments from schools were as follows:
- Request that a primary headteacher representative be present for cases involving primary age pupils.
  - Clarification on the position of pupils who are electively home educated
  - Clarification on a reasonable distance from home to school
  - A request for the Panel minutes to be circulated to headteachers
  - A request for the Fair Access Grids, which detail the net loss/gain of pupils in certain categories at each school, to be circulated termly instead of annually
  - A request for the Fair Access criteria to be sent to the child's out of area school when a child asks to transfer to a Wirral school
- 3.7 Commentary on the feedback received and any actions resulting are provided in Appendix 4.
- 3.8 In summary, the feedback has resulted in amendments to the following sections and paragraphs:
- Elective Home Education – amendment to section 5.4
  - Reasonable Distance – new clarification paragraph 4.2
  - Termly sharing of the Fair Access Grid – new paragraph Appendix B (10)
- 3.9 Other amendments have also been made to reflect the Admissions Code 2021 and Fair Access Guidance 2021.
- Clarification on inclusion of schools “opting out” of in-year co-ordination – 3.1(b) and Appendix A (5)
- 3.10 A revised draft of the Protocol was circulated to the Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers (WASH) and the Primary Cluster Groups. The outcome of this will be entered into this report when available. It is attached as Appendix 3.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are none arising directly as a result of this report.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) require the Council to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2024-25.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) 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 28<sup>th</sup> February. These admission arrangements must then be published on Wirral Borough Council (“the Council”)’s website by 15<sup>th</sup> March. The deadline for objections against the admission arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator is 15<sup>th</sup> May.
- 5.4 Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities to make an annual report to the Schools Adjudicator on admissions to all schools in their area. The report covers how admission arrangements serve the interests of looked after and previously looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including any details where problems have arisen. It includes an assessment of the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols and co-ordination in the local area, including how many children were admitted to each type of school under the protocol, information on admission appeals and any other issues the local authority may wish to include. Additional information may also be requested by the Schools Adjudicator as required by the Secretary of State.

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

- 6.1 The Fair Access Protocol requires a Council Clerk to organise Fair Access Panels, prepare paperwork and disseminate Panel decisions to parents and schools. Fair Access Panels include Council 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 28<sup>th</sup> February of the preceding year would contravene the 2021 Admissions Code and associated guidance. Objections to the admission arrangements can be made to the Schools Adjudicator. Any decision of the Adjudicator must be acted on by the admission authority and admissions arrangements amended accordingly within 2 months of any decision by the Adjudicator. This would be a reputational risk to the Council.
- 7.2 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) 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. Admission arrangements are monitored via the annual report to the Schools Adjudicator (see 5.4) across all Wirral schools. In addition, the annual School Admissions Appeals data collection (APAD) is completed by the Council on behalf of community and voluntary controlled schools, and by own admission authority schools through the Spring Schools Census data collection.

## **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 2021-January 2022, 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 either the Primary or Secondary Scheme, and a consultation is not formally required.
- 8.4 Feedback and comments from Wirral schools on the Wirral Fair Access Protocol were invited on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022, with a deadline for response of 30<sup>th</sup> November 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 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 Clear and fair co-ordinated schemes for admission to school's support ease of access for all residents to local school places. The Fair Access Protocol is intended to ensure that vulnerable children and those who are having difficulty securing a school place in-year who meet the criteria, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible. The Protocol also ensures that all schools admit their fair share of vulnerable and hard to place children and that no one school is overburdened.

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## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Schools 2024-25
- Appendix 2 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Schools 2024-25
- Appendix 3 Wirral Fair Access Protocol

## Appendix 4 Feedback on Wirral Fair Access Protocol

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

[School Admissions Code](#) (2021)

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section B of its Terms of Reference, the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education.

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Children, Young People and Education Committee	<b>31<sup>st</sup> January 2022</b>
Children, Young People and Education Committee	<b>28<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
Cabinet	<b>24<sup>th</sup> February 2020</b>

**SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA  
FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025**

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 2024/25 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:

<b>Admissions Authority</b>	<b>Category of School</b>
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 in line with the requirements set out in the School

Admissions Code. The Council's information for parents is 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](http://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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> birthday falls. Children are normally admitted to school at the beginning of the academic year in which their 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> birthday). The request must be made in writing to the Local Authority.

<b>Child's age 5 birthdate between</b>	<b>First term of compulsory education</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Summer term (April)
1 <sup>st</sup> April and 31 <sup>st</sup> August	Autumn term (September)
1 <sup>st</sup> September and 31 <sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> January to discuss options ([primaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk](mailto: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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 **Single Sex Schools.** Admissions to single-sex school schools are based on the pupil's legal sex as recorded on their birth certificate.

### 3.6 **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](https://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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 in the first year of introduction, taking effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021. Schools must then declare in writing to the Council whether they are opting in or out by 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

<b>Admissions Authorities in Wirral</b>
<b>Wirral Council</b>
<b>Community Primary Schools (53)</b>
<b>Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools (4)</b>
<b>The Governing Bodies of:</b>
<b>Academy Schools</b>
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
<b>Church of England Aided Primary Schools</b>
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
<b>Catholic Aided Primary Schools</b>
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
<b>Joint Denominational Aided Primary Schools</b>
Holy Spirit Catholic and CE Primary School

A full list and map is provided in the Council's information for parents, available online at [www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions).

\* Status subject to confirmation at time of publication.

**PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR 2024-25**

**WIRRAL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>ADMISSION NUMBER</b>
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
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
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 2024-2025**

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 2024/25 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 be 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 for parents, in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code. The Council's information for

parents 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](http://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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> February Wirral Council will inform schools and neighbouring Authorities of the final allocations. On-line applicants will receive an e-mail notification on 1<sup>st</sup> March (or next working day). Paper form applicants will receive a letter posted by second class post on 1<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 **Single Sex Schools.** Admissions to single-sex school schools are based on the pupil's legal sex as recorded on their birth certificate.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 **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.
- 3.8 **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.

3.9 **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 30<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

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.

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 31<sup>st</sup> May, unless they have moved from another part of the country. Parents should still submit a preference form before 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

Admissions to single-sex school schools are based on the pupil's legal sex as recorded on their birth certificate.

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 in the first year of introduction, taking effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021. Schools must then declare to the Council in writing whether they are opting in or out annually by 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

<b>Admission Authorities in Wirral</b>
Wirral Council
Community Secondary Schools (1) Mosslands School
The Governing Bodies of:
<b>Academy Schools</b>
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
<u>Foundation Schools</u>
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 for parents, available on-line at [www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://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
Mosslands School	225



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## **In-Year Admissions Fair Access Protocol 2022 - DRAFT**

### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The School Admissions Code sets out the mandatory requirements regarding the admissions process and makes clear that all local authorities and admission authorities are required to have a Fair Access Protocol, and that all schools and academies must participate in their local authority's protocol in order to ensure that children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting children above the published admission number to schools that are already full.
- 1.2 The School Admissions Code 2021 also makes clear that the local authority must ensure that no school - including those with available places - is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour, under the Fair Access Protocol.

### **2.0 Aims of the Protocol**

- 2.1 The protocol is designed to:
  - a. acknowledge the need for vulnerable young people who are seeking a school place to be dealt with quickly and sympathetically;
  - b. reduce the time that these pupils spend out of school;
  - c. ensure that schools admit pupils including those with challenging educational needs on a fair basis;
  - d. be fair and transparent, and to have the confidence of all schools;
  - e. ensure that all schools accept a fair and equitable share of pupils.

### **3.0 Main Principles**

The majority of pupils are already admitted to Wirral schools through the routine admissions procedures operated by the Mainstream Admissions team, and this will continue to be the case.

- Where schools have places, children should be admitted under the normal admissions procedures unless the requested school demonstrates that category 3.1(i) below applies and requests the case be considered under Fair Access.
- Where an application is made for a secondary school that has reached its admission number, in the majority of cases parents will be advised of alternative schools and the appeals procedure, unless the application falls into one of the Fair Access categories.

3.1 In order for this protocol to be successful:

a. **All schools will take part.**

b. There will be a single point of entry and a coordinated approach for all in-year admissions via the Mainstream Admissions team. These admissions include school to school transfers as well as those who are new to Wirral or the country. Schools who “opt-out” of in-year transfer co-ordination will continue to take part in the Wirral Fair Access Protocol.

c. The Fair Access protocol will apply to all school age pupils (4-16).

d. The protocol will only apply to those pupils who are ordinarily resident within Wirral Authority boundaries.

e. All schools subscribe to a ‘no walk-in’ admissions process.

f. **The protocol may require schools to admit pupils above their Published Admission Number (PAN) and ahead of pupils on their waiting list or awaiting an appeal.**

g. A Fair Access Panel shall make the decisions about placement in an open and transparent way.

h. The distribution of pupils across schools under the protocol shall be fair, with due recognition given to the circumstances of the school, the year group (including the school’s view on the impact on the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources), and circumstances of the individual.

i. Where a school does not wish to admit a child because they have good reason to believe the child may display **challenging behaviour** (as defined in 4.2 below) outside of the normal admissions round, even though there are places available, it can refer the case to the Authority for action under the Fair Access Protocol. **To avoid delay, concerns must be raised within 5 working days of receipt of the child’s application.**

A school should only refer a child to the Fair Access Protocol for this reason if it has a particularly high proportion of either children with challenging behaviour or previously permanently excluded pupils on roll compared to other local schools and it considers that admitting another child with challenging behaviour would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

Schools cannot refuse admission to Looked After Children, previously Looked After Children or children with an Education Health and Care Plan naming the school, on the grounds of challenging behaviour.

j. Undersubscribed schools must not be required to admit a greater proportion of those children referred to a Fair Access Panel, particularly those schools with a recent history of challenging behaviour greater than that of other schools.

k. Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission so that the admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.

l. For schools that are their own admissions authorities, Headteachers and Governors are requested to agree a procedure to empower a subcommittee comprising the Head in consultation with the Chair to make immediate decisions regarding admissions where there is a place available in the year group. Where the year group is full, the Admissions Committee should be convened as soon as possible so that the decision regarding admission can be made without delay.

m. Schools should not refuse to admit a child who has been denied a place by an Independent Appeal Panel, if the Fair Access Panel subsequently identifies that school as the one to admit the child. This could occur if the parental appeal to the Independent Appeal Panel takes place before the Fair Access Panel meets.

#### 4.0 Children Covered by the Protocol

It is a legal requirement that Looked After Children (LAC) and previously looked after children (as defined by the Admissions Code 2021) be given first priority for admission to all schools within their oversubscription criteria. **Any consideration of a school move for a child in care must be preceded by a PEP. The PEP should have representation from the existing school, social care and LACES.**

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are not covered by this Protocol as their needs are covered by specific guidance in the SEN Code of Practice. Any consideration of a school move must be preceded by an EHCP Review.

4.1 The Fair Access Protocol must cover children who fall into one of the following categories:

- a. children either subject to a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, or having had a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan within 12 months at the point of being referred to the protocol
- b. children living in a refuge or in other Relevant Accommodation at the point of being referred to the Protocol
- c. children from the criminal justice system
- d. children in alternative provision who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream education or have been permanently excluded but are deemed suitable for mainstream education;
- e. children with special educational needs (but without an Education, Health and Care Plan), disabilities or medical conditions
- f. children who are carers.
- g. children who are homeless.
- h. children in formal kinship care arrangements (as evidenced by either child arrangements order not relating to either birth parent or a special guardianship order)
- i. children of, or who are, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers.

- j. children who have been refused a school place on the grounds of their challenging behaviour and referred to the Protocol in accordance with paragraph 3.10 of the Admissions Code 2021
- k. children for whom a place has not been sought due to exceptional circumstances.
- l. children who have been out of education for four or more weeks where it can be demonstrated that there are no places available at any school within a reasonable distance (see 4.2) of their home. This does not include circumstances where a suitable place has been offered to a child and this has not been accepted; and,
- m. previously looked after children for whom the local authority has been unable to promptly secure a school place.

4.2 **Reasonable distance:** The reasonable home to school travel distance is below 2 miles for children aged under 8, and under 3 miles for children aged 8 and over. This is measured as the shortest safe walking route as defined in the Wirral Home to School Transport Policy. Parents may apply for a school further than the reasonable distance; this does not necessarily carry with it eligibility for free home to school travel. Panel decisions which give a place at a school over the reasonable travel distance that were not a parental preference may result in free travel eligibility. The age needs and circumstances of the child may also be taken into account by the Panel in deciding if a travel distance is reasonable.

4.3 **Challenging behaviour:** Under the School Admissions Code 2021, behaviour can be described as “challenging” where:

*“it would be unlikely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions to help prevent and address pupil misbehaviour or it is of such severity, frequency, or duration that it is beyond the normal range that schools can tolerate. We would expect this behaviour to significantly interfere with the pupil’s/other pupils’ education or jeopardise the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment”.*

A child with challenging behaviour may also be disabled as defined in the Equality Act 2010. When considering using these grounds, schools should consider their duties under that Act; including the implications when a pupil exhibits a tendency to physical abuse of other persons as a consequence of a disability.

4.4 Wirral’s Fair Access protocol **does not cover:**

- Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (see above); Any consideration of a school move must be preceded by an EHCP review.
- Children who are in care (looked after), as these children must be admitted (see above). **Any consideration of a school move for a child currently in care must be preceded by a PEP. The PEP should have representation from the existing school, social care and LACES.**

## 5.0 Fair Access Protocol Procedure

### 5.1 Referrals to the Fair Access Panel

Admission of **hard to place children** will be co-ordinated by the Mainstream Admissions team.

Where the requested school identifies that an application meets the criteria for a 'Hard to Place' pupil as defined above, the case must be notified to the Mainstream Admissions team within 5 school days who will refer the case to the Clerk of the Fair Access Panel.

Where none of the requested schools are able to or have refused to offer a place and the Mainstream Admissions team identifies that the child meets the Fair Access criteria, the Mainstream Admissions team may also refer an application directly to the Fair Access Panel.

**Managed Move decisions** and re-integration to mainstream school decisions for pupils attending **the Progress School** will be referred to the Fair Access Panel by the Managed Move and Exclusions manager.

5.4 In reaching a decision on the placement of a Hard to Place child, each panel will consider the balance of circumstances of the pupil and the circumstances of the school, taking into account the following factors:

- i. the distance and ease of travel from home to school;
- ii. the fairness of any placement and proportion of hard to place pupils in each school as reflected in the "grid";
- iii. the school that is the parent/carer's preferred choice;
- iv. the religious affiliation of the pupil (where possible)
- v. genuine concerns from the requested school about admission (e.g. previous serious breakdown of relationship or local issues that will have an impact on the school, child or child's family);
- vi. other reasonable considerations.

NB. Where a child is returning from elective home education, the Panel would firstly consider a placement at the Wirral secondary school the child most recently attended, unless there are strong grounds to decide otherwise, taking into account i. to vi. above.

5.3 **Failure to engage** - The Fair Access Panel may request the Attendance Service intervene with a family where it can be shown that a pupil has been placed through the Panel but the family fails to engage with the named school when it tries to secure admission of the pupil, e.g. parent/carer has failed to engage in securing admission of the child to the school within 5 working school days of notification that a place has been allocated.

- 5.4 **The Grid** - The Mainstream Admissions team will maintain a grid in order to ensure that schools are not being asked to admit a disproportionate number of pupils through the Protocol. This grid will also take into account permanent exclusions as a transfer out. When a pupil is admitted under the protocol, this will add a positive factor to the school's weighting whilst transfers out will add a negative factor. Pupils admitted or leaving through a 'Managed Move' or reintegration from the Progress Schools will also be included on this grid. A list of schools showing the number of vacancies in each year group will also be provided to the Panel.
- 5.5 **Outcomes of FAP panels** - Within 7 working days, the Clerk to the panel will inform any school not represented at a Panel if the decision relates to that school. The Clerk will inform parents in writing within 7 working days with a copy to the previous and requested school and to the Mainstream Admissions team.
- 5.6 **Right to an appeal** - Parents/carers retain a legal right to an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.
- 5.7 **Powers of Direction** - If a school is identified as the one to admit a child by a Fair Access Panel and refuses to do so, the local authority may use their powers of direction in the case of maintained schools or request the Secretary of State to intervene and direct an academy school. See 'Rules Governing Direction'.
- 5.8 **Placement Procedure** - for the purposes of this regulation a child is a pupil at the school from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- 5.9 Pupils join the school roll on the expected first day of attendance and must be listed in both admissions and the attendance registers from that day. If a child is the subject of a School Attendance Order, he/she only becomes registered at the school if the parents enrol him/her at the school and agree the first day on which the child will attend. If this does not happen the parent(s) are in breach of the Order. If the parents agree the first day that their child will attend, any subsequent absence should be treated in the same way as any other pupil.
- 5.10 **Monitoring** - In order to maintain transparency in the placement process and to facilitate the work of the Panels, the local authority will collect data on admissions and the list of schools. This data will be made available to each of the panels. An annual report will be presented to the Department's Senior Management Team; and to Schools Forum as required.
- 5.11 **Review** - The protocol will be reviewed annually.

## APPENDIX A

### Panel membership and terms of reference

The panel meets monthly or as required.

#### 1. Composition of the Panel

In addition to a Clerk, the Panel will include

- The Assistant Director for Education

The lead officers for the following services:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- School Attendance
- Managed Moves and Exclusions
- Alternative Provision
- 14 to 19
- Other persons as required

In addition, the Panel will include at minimum two headteachers\* on a volunteer basis, who will participate for a minimum of 12 months. Appointment of a new headteacher representative will be via nomination by Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers (WASH) and will be staggered.

A Headteacher who is not currently a Panel member may attend as a non-participatory observer by request to the Panel Chair; agreement to this is at the Chair's discretion.

The Panel will include a primary headteacher representative\* where there is a referral for a primary aged child.

In all cases, headteachers will not consider applications in relation to their own school.

*\*The headteacher of a school may appoint a senior representative to attend the Panel, with full powers to act on his/her behalf in respect of decisions in relation to the placement of children brought to the panel.*

#### 2. Frequency of meeting

The Panel will meet at least monthly and may meet more frequently as required, e.g. bi-monthly.

3. The Panel will be chaired by the Lead Commissioner for Schools or their proxy representative.
4. The quorum for the panel will be a minimum of three members.
5. All in-year admissions will go through the Mainstream Admissions team. Schools opting out of in-year co-ordination must send Fair Access referrals to the Mainstream Admissions team within 5 days of receipt of a direct application being received.

6. The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that all casework is prepared and made available to the Chair at least 5 school days prior to the panel meeting.
7. The Clerk will ensure that the Panel decision is communicated to the parent/carer and the schools concerned within 7 school days.
8. The school will agree a start date with the parent that is no later than 10 school days following the panel meeting.
9. Where the offer of a place is not in line with parental preference, parent/carers will be advised of the appropriate course of action they can take in the Clerk's letter to the parent, which will include the right to an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.
10. Decisions on placement will be by majority view.
11. The Chair's role is pivotal to the success of the panel. This includes overseeing data, liaising with School Admissions Team and school reps, providing support and acting as a mediator with some of the more difficult cases, negotiating with Heads and ultimately ensuring decisions taken are carried through.

### **Notes**

1. Any difficulties or delay in securing the identified placement of any pupil by a Fair Access Panel will be brought to the attention of the Director for Children, Families and Education by the Clerk or the Senior Manager for Admissions who will make a decision about the most appropriate response which may include direction to admit or referral to the Secretary of State to direct. The Director for Children, Families and Education may also write to the Chair of Governors if a school is deemed to be obstructing or not co-operating with the agreed protocol.
2. In order to monitor actions taken to place pupils presented to the panel, the Clerk will ensure that accurate records are maintained and that these are forwarded electronically within 7 working days to the Mainstream Admissions team. Data required will include allocated school, start date and pupil name.

## **Appendix B**

### **The Weightings**

#### PRINCIPLES

1. The list will allow comparisons between schools so that the admission and transfer of pupils under Fair Access/Managed Moves can easily be tracked
2. The weightings will enhance the priority of very vulnerable groups of children

#### FORMAT OF THE WEIGHTINGS

3. The list will be a simple spreadsheet identifying all schools in the relevant phase (primary and secondary) – “the Grid”.
4. There will be columns to track transferred in pupils, i.e. hard to place pupils admitted by the school (plus 1 point).
5. Columns will also track transferred out hard to place pupils (minus 1 point).
6. The difference between the ‘IN’ and the ‘OUT’ columns will give a net score for each year group and for each school overall. The school with the lowest or most negative weighted score will be deemed the next most likely school to admit a pupil, taking into account parental preference.
7. The spreadsheet will also maintain a column that records the number of ‘managed moves’ and re-integrations from the Progress School involving each school. These pupils will attract a single weighting (+1 point for the receiving school and -1 point for the transfer out school), which will be added to the weighted score for each school to give a total weighting.

Any subsequent failure of a Managed Move or reintegration will not be taken into account.

The summary sheet by year group and school will be provided to the Fair Access Panel.

#### MAINTENANCE AND USE OF THE WEIGHTINGS

8. The Mainstream Admissions team will maintain copies of the relative weightings and will ensure they are updated before the next relevant panel meeting.
9. The weightings will be used by Fair Access panels to inform their decision making about the school indicated to admit a pupil
10. The Grid for secondary schools will be provided by the Clerk to the Fair Access Panel at the end of each Academic term to the Chair of WASH.

## Appendix C

### Rules Governing Direction

**Local authority powers of direction (general)** - A local authority has the power to direct the admission authority for any maintained school in its area to admit a child even when the school is full. The local authority can only make such a direction in respect of a child in the local authority's area who has been refused entry to, or has been permanently excluded from, every suitable school within a reasonable distance. The local authority **must** choose a school that is a reasonable distance from the child's home and from which the child is not permanently excluded. It **must not** choose a sixth-form that selects by ability unless the child meets the selection requirements, or a school that would have to take measures to avoid breaking the rules on infant class sizes if those measures would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Before deciding to give a direction, the local authority **must** consult the governing body of the school, the parent of the child and the child if they are over compulsory school age. If, following consultation, the local authority decides to direct, it **must** inform the governing body and head teacher of the school. The governing body can appeal by referring the case to the Schools Adjudicator within 15 days. If it does this, the governing body **must** tell the local authority. The local authority **must not** make a direction until the 15 days have passed and the case has not been referred. If the case is referred to the Schools Adjudicator, the Schools Adjudicator may either uphold the direction, determine that another maintained school **must** admit the child or decide not to issue a direction. The Adjudicator's decision is binding. The Schools Adjudicator **must not** direct a school to admit a child if this would require the school to take measures to avoid breaking the rules on infant class sizes and those measures would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

**Secretary of State's power of direction (Academies)** - Where a local authority considers that an Academy will best meet the needs of any child, it can ask the Academy to admit that child but has no power to direct it to do so. The local authority and the Academy will usually come to an agreement, but if the Academy refuses to admit the child, the local authority can ask the Secretary of State to intervene. The Secretary of State has the power under an Academy's Funding Agreement to direct the Academy to admit a child, and can seek advice from the Schools Adjudicator in reaching a decision

## Appendix 4

### Feedback on the Wirral Fair Access Protocol

Feedback	Commentary	Amendment?	Related section
Primary headteacher for primary cases	Already included	No	Appendix A (1)
Elective Home Education	Whilst it is a serious decision that should not be taken lightly, all parents have a legal right to educate their child at home. Some parents of home educated children will subsequently seek to return their child to mainstream education. Where a child in this position has been refused a place at the preferred school(s), they may be referred to the Fair Access Panel, principally under criterion (I) although others may also apply. Such referrals would usually be supported by the Council's Attendance Team where home education has been deemed to be unsuitable. The Wirral Fair Access Panel has a standing unwritten procedural agreement where, unless there are strong grounds to decide otherwise, the Panel would ordinarily decide that the child should return to their previous school. Strong grounds might for example include a house move so that the travel distance is now unreasonable, or where there are serious safeguarding or other concerns.	Yes	5.4
Reasonable Distance	The reasonable travel distance from home to school is under 2 miles for children under 8 years old, and under 3 miles for children and young people aged 8 and over. The Panel may also take into account the child's circumstances in deciding whether the distance is reasonable.	Yes	New paragraph 4.2
Panel minutes	There are no minutes from the Panel – a decision record is made however this identifies individual pupils and is not suitable for circulation. Schools receive individual notifications about any pupils where the Panel has decided a place should be offered via the Clerk or Admissions team. The overall net loss/gain is captured in the Grid which is provided to schools (see below). Any Headteacher who is not a Panel member may attend as a non-participatory observer on request, at the discretion of the Panel Chair.	No	Appendix A (1) and A (7) refers
Termly sharing of the Grid	The Grid weights transfers as +1 or -1 to provide a net gain/loss by school and year group. It is cumulative, calculated ahead of each Panel meeting, and takes into account Managed Moves; permanent exclusions; reintegrations from alternative provision and Fair Access decisions.	Yes	New item Appendix B(10)

Background from out of area schools	The Wirral Admissions team requests background information for secondary aged pupils requesting a transfer to a Wirral school. This is a locally agreed procedure, not a requirement and is not enforceable with out of area or overseas schools – it is not part of the Fair Access Protocol. The Fair Access Criteria are the same for every school in England. The background information request form has been amended to ask the current/previous school’s attention to relay any Fair Access issues they may be aware of, when their response to the request. The Protocol itself does not require an amendment.	No	Background request form amended
<b>Other</b>	<b>Commentary</b>	<b>Amendment?</b>	<b>Related section</b>
“Opt-out” schools still part of Protocol	The Protocol says that there will be a single point of entry for all in-year admissions. However, the 2021 Admissions Code introduced an opt-in system where own admission authority schools must actively opt-in to in-year co-ordination. To date, only one Wirral school – Upton Hall School FCJ - has decided to opt-out of in-year co-ordination. The Fair Access Protocol continues to apply to all opted-out schools and the Protocol has been amended to further clarify this.	Yes	3.1(b) and Appendix A(5)



## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

24 January 2023

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>BUDGET SETTING 2023/24</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider feedback and outcomes from the Budget Workshops which have been held in recent months. The workshops enabled officer and member liaison on proposed budget options, to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be obtained on further analysis required. The Budget Workshops also provided an opportunity for alternative proposals to be considered.

The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope. The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.

This report also provides an update on the 2023/24 budget setting process with details on the most recent budget options, which were developed in response to the previously outlined budget gap.

Appendix 2 and 3 of this report contains exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It is in the public interest to exclude the press and public during consideration of these items under Paragraph 3 'information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Agree that the Budget Workshop feedback and outcomes, as detailed in Appendices 2 & 3, be reported to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.
2. Note the latest budget information provided to Policy and Resources Committee in January.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set an annual balanced budget, which establishes how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. To successfully do so, engagement with members, staff and residents is undertaken; the recommendations in this report relate to this endeavour and act as a pre-cursor to budget proposals, scheduled to be considered by Full Council on 27 February 2023, following the schedule of activity shown in Appendix 4.
- 1.2 Failure to set a lawful budget in time may lead to a loss of revenue, significant additional administrative costs, as well as reputational damage. Failure to set a budget may lead to intervention from the Secretary of State under section 15 the Local Government Act 1999.
- 1.3 The scale of the financial challenge that the Council faces cannot be overstated. Setting a budget, especially in the context of largely uncontrollable, macro-economic pressures, emerging at an unprecedented pace, requires difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Regular Member engagement on the process, which this report forms part of, is considered essential for effective budget formulation.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 A report does not have to be provided to the Committee to outline activity at this stage, however it is considered appropriate to do so in order to ensure that the Committee has up-to-date information in respect of the financial context that the Council is operating within and set out the budget setting stages that are expected to follow, in order that the Committee can comment accordingly.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Policy & Resources Committee is responsible for co-ordinating processes for the development of the Budget and Policy Framework, together with decision-making on cross-cutting policies not part of the Policy Framework. The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope. The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.
- 3.2 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has met regularly to discuss the budget setting process, budget proposals, the budget gap that the Council faces and the associated uncertainty on funding. Member engagement in the process has taken place through Budget Workshops along with the presentation on Committee reports.
- 3.3 The Budget workshops were convened to enable officer and member liaison on proposed budget options, in order to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be

obtained on further analysis required. The Budget Workshops also provided an opportunity for alternative proposals to be considered.

- 3.4 The outcomes of these workshops are to be reported to meetings of those committees and will in turn be communicated to the Policy & Resources Committee as part of the decision-making process that facilitates a budget proposal to Full Council.
- 3.5 Appendix 2 to this report details the feedback and outcomes from the Budget Workshops in the Summer of 2022 to consider tranche one options. Appendix 3 to the report details the feedback and outcomes from the Budget Workshops held throughout October and November 2022 to consider options the address the further tranche 2 savings noted as required as a result of the national macroeconomic pressures the Council is facing.
- 3.5 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 5 October 2022, a potential budget gap of £49m for 2023/24 was presented. Members will be aware that the budget gap is an ever-moving target due to a number of factors; these include:
- Ongoing Government announcements of funding, including specifically the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2023/24.
  - A process of challenge and refinement within the Council to ensure that the proposals are evidence based.
  - Addition of new pressures that continue to materialise as further local and national evidence comes to light.
  - The continuing refinement of budget assumptions including inflation.
  - The development and refinement of budget options.
- 3.6 As a result of these factors, the budget forecast presented in October 2022 was updated and a more robust position is now available (the most recent budget update report presented to the Policy & Resources Committee can be found in Appendix 1). This position - which was an estimated budget gap in December of £38.4m - has been noted as £32.3m after application of the Provisional Finance Settlement information. This represents the Budget shortfall as of the date of the report and represents the target which needs to be offset with efficiencies, savings and cost reductions to deliver a balanced position.
- 3.7 The impact of all these changes will be considered, along with feedback from the consultation process and the budget proposals developed through the Service Committee and Policy & Resources Committee (P&R) Budget Workshop approach to present a robust position on financial matters to be considered in formulating a budget proposal to Full Council.
- 3.8 Policy & Resources Committee budget recommendations will be proposed in February 2023 in respect of the agreement of the annual Budget, setting of the council tax requirement and related matters to the Council, which will be debated by Full Council and voted upon by a simple majority.
- 3.9 Given the current size of the budget shortfall, the current level/breadth of services provided by the Council is not considered feasible and viable for continuance, hence

the requirement to consider a number of potential budget options to ensure this gap can be closed.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on recent budget setting activity and describes the context in which the budget for 2023/24 is being set, where a prudent approach is being undertaken to develop budget proposals amidst an uncertain financial landscape.
- 4.2 The programme to develop a robust budget position, of which this report is a part, will support the Council in demonstrating compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management (FM) Code, specifically in relation to Section 4 of the FM Code which refers to the Annual Budget.
- 4.3 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes used 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, which 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 and are mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, Internal Audit and inspection.
  - Sustainability: issues around sustainability of local services are 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 and the budget options presented have been drawn up with this in mind; consideration is given to areas of discretionary expenditure that could be curtailed along with demonstrating savings that can be delivered from statutory components of the Council.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.
- 5.2 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. 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.

- 5.3 Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that the Council has to set its budget before 11<sup>th</sup> March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 When considering options, Members must bear in mind their fiduciary duty to the council taxpayers of Wirral. Members must have adequate evidence on which to base their decisions on the level of quality at which services should be provided.
- 5.6 Where a service is provided pursuant to a statutory duty, it would be unlawful 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.
- 5.7 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 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.
- 5.8 There is a particular requirement to take into consideration the Council's fiduciary duty and the public sector equality duty in coming to its decision.
- 5.9 The public sector equality duty is that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 5.10 Any decision made in the exercise of any function is potentially open to challenge if the duty has been disregarded. The duty applies both to Full Council when setting the budget and to the Policy and Services Committees when considering decisions.
- 5.11 Once a budget is in place, Council has delegated responsibility to the Policy and Services Committees to implement it. The Committees may not act contrary to the Budget without consent of Council other than in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of the Constitution.

5.12 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that agreed savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

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

6.1 The implications for staffing, ICT and Assets are complicit with individual savings proposals. Until decisions are taken in forming the final set of proposals to balance the 2023/24 Budget the overall impact is not able to be defined precisely.

## **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. Examples of which are the significant emerging inflationary and cost of living pressures, 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 The risk of this not being able to be achieved could mean that the Council does not have enough funding to offset its expenditure commitments for the year and therefore not be able report a balanced budget at the end of the year. This could result in the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice.

7.4 A key risk to the Council's financial plans is that funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the MTFP is regularly reviewed and updated as part of routine financial management.

7.5 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 2023/24 budget at risk and may result in a balanced budget not being identified in time for the deadline of 11 March 2023.

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 CSR, additional savings proposals or reduced expenditure would need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a balanced five-year MTFP can be achieved.

Committees will be kept updated with any announcements regarding the CSR through the year.

- 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 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in arriving at the governance process for the 2023/24 budget setting process. SLT have overseen the production of the budget scenarios laid out in this report.
- 8.2 Engagement with local residents and businesses has been undertaken as part of the budget setting process. The public consultation on Youth Services is still ongoing and the outcome of it will be shared with members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee when available, to enable them to consider and comment prior to it being presented to Policy and Resources Committee on 15 February 2023.

## **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 At this time, there are no further equality implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be equality implications associated with these, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 At this time, there are no additional environmental and climate implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be environment and climate implications associated with these that will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 This report has no direct community wealth implications however the budget proposals under consideration should 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 - POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT**  
**APPENDIX 2 (EXEMPT) – TRANCHE 1 BUDGET WORKSHOP FEEDBACK AND OUTCOMES**  
**APPENDIX 3 (EXEMPT) - TRANCHE 2 BUDGET WORKSHOP FEEDBACK AND OUTCOMES**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

CIPFA's Financial Management Code  
The Annual Audit Letter for Wirral Council 2019-20

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>18 January 2023</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>9 November 2022</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>5 October 2022</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>13 July 2022</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>16 March 2022</b>
<b>Full Council</b>	<b>28 February 2022</b>







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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>2023/24 BUDGET UPDATE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (\$151 OFFICER)</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on the 2023/24 budget position following the forecast position presented at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 5 October 2022 and at the subsequent Policy & Resources Committee Budget Workshop on 24 November 2022. Budget options are set out in this report, which have been developed in response to the previously outlined budget gap.

The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, is charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget to recommend to the Council. The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope.

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 19 December 2022 and the information provided in this report outlines the government's announcements on that day and afterwards. The Provisional Finance Settlement becomes final at a date set by Government in late January or early February 2023.

The Settlement provided a level of additional resources to the Council and in addition the prospect of increasing Council Tax and the Adult Social care Precept by 4.99% for 2023/24; this is significantly below the headline rate of inflation in the UK economy at the present time (CPI c.10% at the date of this report). However, the additional resources which amount to £6.3m are insufficient to bridge the Council's Budget shortfall which has been confirmed in the sum of £49m (gross) and £32.3m (net) following the completion of internal review and the impact of the Provisional Settlement but excluding the higher level of Council Tax increase that is now possible; that is 4.99% rather than 2.99% as envisaged in the MTFP approved by Council in February 2022.

Final budget proposals will be presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 15 February 2023 for recommendation to full Council. This report supports the delivery of the Wirral Plan as part of the process of delivering a balanced budget for all Council activity, and therefore all Wirral Plan aims and objectives, for 2023/24. This report is not a key decision.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the outcome of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2023/24, in advance of the Final Settlement which is expected in late January/early February 2023.

2. Recognise the extent of the Council's financial challenge and the need to make significant financial savings in order to maintain the Council as a going concern, to avoid the issuance of a Section 114 notice and the potential ministerial intervention under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 which would be likely to ensue.
3. Note the savings, efficiencies and income proposals that are available to address the 2023/24 budget gap.
4. Note the latest position on consultation and agree to consult on the Budget proposals for 2023/24, under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
5. Note that the Section 151 Officer may need to make further adjustments to the forecast budget shortfall pending final decisions by Members in the period ahead.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. To do this effectively requires engagement with staff, elected members and residents along with other stakeholders. Previous reports to the Committee have highlighted the external challenges that are impacting on the 2023/24 budget setting process and have highlighted the extent of the financial challenge faced. This report presents the culmination of the work undertaken to present options for budget formulation and to ensure the necessary preparations to facilitate a budget recommendation to Council on 27 February 2023.
- 1.2 The scale of the financial challenge that the Council faces cannot be overstated. Setting a budget, especially in the context of largely uncontrollable, macro-economic pressures, requires challenging decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Members have been engaged in the process through the work of the Policy and Service Committees and the Policy and Resource Budget and Development Group composed of Group Leaders.
- 1.3 Failure to set a balanced budget may lead to intervention from the Secretary of State under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999. Failure to set a lawful budget by the required deadline will lead to a loss of revenue that is likely to be irrecoverable and incur significant additional costs and reputational damage. Providing this update following the announcement of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, is a way of taking suitable steps to enable the Council to set a lawful budget and to protect the Council, Customers and Members from the consequences of failing to take the necessary decisions.
- 1.4 Council approved the then latest Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at its meeting on 28 February 2022; this confirmed key principles the Council would consider 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 Challenge Panels
  - 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 recommendation to Full Council, are fully scrutinised and fit and proper in terms of readiness for decision-making. Contained within this report are all current options for consideration prior to the need to make final decisions on how the budget for 2023/24 should be balanced.
- 1.7 The information contained in this report also provides the opportunity for the Policy and Services Committees at their meetings in January 2023 to provide feedback on the budget proposals for the Policy and Resources Committee to take into consideration in recommending a lawful budget to Full Council at its meeting of 27 February 2023.

1.8 As part of the budget setting process, the Policy and Resources Committee is able to take into consideration the outcome of the budget setting consultation process with residents, businesses, and all those with a stake in the future of Wirral.

## **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 5 October 2022, a potential budget gap of £49m for 2023/24 was presented. Members will be aware that the budget gap is an ever-moving target due to a number of factors; these include:

- Ongoing Government announcements of funding, including specifically the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2023/24
- A process of challenge and refinement within the Council to ensure that the proposals are evidence based. Addition of new pressures that continue to materialise as further local and national evidence comes to light.
- The continuing refinement of budget assumptions including inflation.
- The development and refinement of budget options.

3.2 As a result of these factors, the budget forecast presented in October 2022 has been updated and a more robust position is now available. This position - which was estimated before Christmas at £38.4m - has been confirmed as £32.3m after application of the Provisional Finance Settlement. This represents the Budget shortfall as of the date of this report and represents the target which needs to be offset with efficiencies, savings and cost reductions in moving towards a balanced position.

## 2023/24 Budget Position

- The 2023/24 budget position is currently as follows:

	<b>23-24 Budget Position Reported in 5 Oct 22 (£m)</b>	<b>23-24 Revised Budget Position (£m)</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>-339.30</b>	<b>-363.19</b>
<b>BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>		
Baseline	330.58	330.58
Removal of one-off items from 21/22:	-2.81	-2.81
<b>Baseline Restated</b>	<b>327.77</b>	<b>327.77</b>
<b>ADD KNOWN PRESSURES/ GROWTH</b>	<b>60.54</b>	<b>67.72</b>
<b>INITIAL BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>49.00</b>	<b>32.30</b>
DEDUCT PROPOSED NET SAVINGS	0	-39.50
<b>REVISED BUDGET GAP / (SURPLUS)</b>	<b>49.00</b>	<b>-7.20</b>

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

- 3.3 In November 2022, the Chancellor of the Exchequer make fiscal announcements in his Autumn Statement. The details of this and further information has been supplied in the Provisional Finance Settlement and the main points are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 5 October, it was noted that officers would work up a further package of savings proposals to meet the forecast budget shortfall at that time with Members engaged via the Group Leaders' Budget Development Working Group established by Policy and Resources Committee. Accordingly, a set of budget proposals for 2023/24 are included in Appendix 3.

### Capital Programme

- 3.5 In view of the very large revenue savings needed to balance the 2023/24 revenue budget the Budget proposals do not envisage additional Capital Programming for financial year 2023/24 unless one of the following conditions are met:
- The item is to be funded from Government grants, Section 106 contributions or other contributions and funding external to the Council
  - The item is funded from capital receipts

3. The item forms part of a business case that demonstrates clearly that revenue savings will flow from the capital investment and that these savings will exceed the commitment to fund this from borrowing or revenue resources.

3.6 The underlying assumptions used to form the forecast budget shortfall have already taken into account the savings arising from ongoing slippage in the Capital Programme. In addition the review has also identified opportunities to reach for further savings from existing programming.

#### **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 27 February 2023.

4.2 The programme to develop a robust budget position, of which this report is a part, will support the Council in demonstrating compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code, specifically in relation to Section 4 of the FM Code which refers to the Annual Budget.

4.3 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes used 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, which 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 and are mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, Internal Audit and inspection.
- Sustainability: issues around sustainability of local services are 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 and the budget options presented have been drawn up with this in mind, consideration is given to areas of discretionary expenditure that could be curtailed along with demonstrating savings that can be delivered from statutory components of the Council.

#### **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 in February, 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 Once the Committee has agreed draft budget proposals, 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 proposals). 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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 are complicit with individual savings proposals. Until decisions are taken in forming the final set of proposals to balance the 2023/24 Budget the overall impact is not able to be defined precisely.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The Budget process designed for 2023/24 mitigates the risks of a Budget not being set lawfully. This is underpinned by a robust monitoring and review process both in 2022/23 and for 2023/24.
- 7.2 Failure to achieve a balanced budget would lead to the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice and potential ministerial invention under Section 15 of the Local Government Act

1999.

- 7.3 Funding and demand assumptions 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.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Initial 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. An update on the approach, methodology and current findings as of this date (given the consultation remains live) can be found in Appendix 4.
- 8.2 Statutory budget consultation will commence subject to agreement by the Committee. This will take place in January 2023 and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 15 February 2023.
- 8.3 The Council has engaged regularly with trade unions about the Council's financial position. This will continue throughout the budget setting process.

## **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.

## **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:
- a. 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.
  - b. More local & community ownership of the economy – Supporting cooperatives and community businesses. Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses. Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during recent years to further develop this sector.
  - c. Decent and Fair Employment Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
  - d. Making wealth work for local places

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Forecast Budget Position 2023/24.

Appendix 2: Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24.

Appendix 3: Budget Setting Options 2023/24.

Appendix 4: Budget Consultation Update 2023/24.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	09 November 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	05 October 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	13 July 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	16 March 2022
Full Council	28 February 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	15 February 2022

Appendix 1 - Forecast Budget Position 2023/24.

	<b>23-24 Budget Position Reported in 5 Oct 22 (£m)</b>	<b>23-24 Revised Budget Position (£m)</b>	<b>Change (£m)</b>	<b>Note</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>				
Council Tax	-168.43	-168.63	-0.20	
Business Rates	-138.07	-152.96	-14.89	
Other	-32.80	-41.59	-8.80	
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>-339.30</b>	<b>-363.19</b>	<b>-23.89</b>	<b>a</b>
<b>BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>				
Baseline	330.58	330.58	0.00	
Removal of one-off items from 21/22:	-2.81	-2.81	0.00	
<b>Baseline Restated</b>	<b>327.77</b>	<b>327.77</b>	<b>0.00</b>	
<b>ADD KNOWN PRESSURES/ GROWTH</b>	<b>60.54</b>	<b>67.72</b>	<b>7.18</b>	
<b>BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>49.00</b>	<b>32.30</b>	<b>-16.70</b>	
<b>DEDUCT PROPOSED SAVINGS</b>				
Increasing Business Efficiencies	0	-17.91	-17.91	
Increasing Income	0	-5.36	-5.36	
Changing how we fund or provide services	0	-8.97	-8.97	
Reducing or stopping services	0	-7.26	-7.26	
<b>Total Savings Income and efficiencies:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-39.50</b>	<b>-39.50</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>REVISED BUDGET GAP / (SURPLUS)</b>	<b>49.00</b>	<b>-7.20</b>	<b>-56.20</b>	

**Notes**

**a: Funding Changes**

	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Estimated funding assumptions 1 Oct 22		-339.30
Revised estimated funding assumptions Nov 22	-8.97	
Impact of Council Tax base increase	-0.20	
Additional funding - Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement	-14.72	
		-23.89
<b>Revised estimated funding assumptions Dec 22</b>		<b>-363.19</b>

**Impact of Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement**

Adjustment to funding	-14.72	
Related new pressures	8.44	
<b>Net Impact of provisional Local Government Finance Settlement</b>		<b><u>-6.28</u></b>

**b: Proposed Savings**

<b>Proposed savings by Tranche</b>	<b>23-24 Budget Position Reported in 5 Oct 22 (£m)</b>	<b>23-24 Revised Budget Position (£m)</b>
Tranche 1	0	-12.02
Tranche 2	0	-13.49
Tranche 3	0	-14.00
<b>Total Savings Income and efficiencies:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-39.50</b>

<b>Proposed saving by Committee</b>	<b>23-24 Budget Position Reported in 5 Oct 22 (£m)</b>	<b>23-24 Revised Budget Position (£m)</b>
Adult Social Care and Public Health	0	-5.94
Children, Young People & Education	0	-5.47
Economy Regeneration & Housing	0	-2.66
Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport	0	-1.69
Policy & Resources	0	-17.37
Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure	0	-6.38
<b>Total Savings Income and efficiencies:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-39.50</b>

## Appendix 2

### Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24

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#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This briefing note outlines the government's announcement and subsequent publications on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 concerning the Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 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.
- 1.2 The Local Government Finance Settlement gives a net betterment position of £6.28m compared to previous assumptions in the Medium-Term Financial Position (MTFP).
- 1.3 The £6.28m includes £12.30m more than previously assumed in Adult Social Care related ringfenced grants. However, this will bring additional cost pressures of £8.44m.
- 1.4 Despite additional funding in the settlement, additional savings will still be required in order to achieve a balanced budget position for 2023/24.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the government announced The Autumn Statement, alongside the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR's) new set of Economic and Fiscal Outlook forecasts. The Autumn Statement responded to the OBR forecasts and set out the medium-term path for public finances and the Government's spending plans for each government department for the next two financial years, including local government.

Following this, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 the Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 was announced, with impacts on Core Spending Power for 2023/24, Social Care Grant allocations as well as other grant details. The settlement was for a single year only based on Spending Review 2021 funding levels updated for the Autumn Statement 2022 announcements.

At the same time, a consultation related to the settlement proposals was launched, which runs for 4 weeks and concludes on 16<sup>th</sup> 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 the maximum permitted Council Tax increase is implemented) through the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The headline announcement was that an additional £5 billion of funding would be "made available" to councils, representing a 9.2% cash terms increase, with a minimum increase being guaranteed at 3%.

Despite a 9.2% cash terms increase, the increase in funding does not meet inflation pressures faced by Councils, and therefore represents a real term drop in core spending power.

The main sources of the funding are summarised in the following table:

<b>ENGLAND</b> Funding Source	2022-23*	Provisional 2023-24	Change 23-24	Change 23-24
	<i>£ million</i>	<b>£ million</b>	<i>£ million</i>	%
Settlement Funding Assessment	14,882.2	<b>15,671.1</b>	788.9	5.3%
Compensation for the business rates multiplier	1,275.1	<b>2,204.6</b>	929.5	72.9%
Council Tax Requirement	31,922.5	<b>33,838.4</b>	1,915.9	6.0%
Improved Better Care Fund	2,139.8	<b>2,139.8</b>	0	0
New Homes Bonus	556.0	<b>290.6</b>	-265.4	-47.7%
Rural Services Delivery Grant	85.0	<b>85.0</b>	0	0
Social Care Grant	2,346.4	<b>3,852.0</b>	1,505.6	64.2%
Services Grant	822.0	<b>464.2</b>	-357.8	-45.5%
Market sustainability and FCC (and improvement)	162.0	<b>562.0</b>	400	246.9%
ASC Discharge Funding	0	<b>300.0</b>	300	100%
Lower Tier Services Grant	111.0	<b>0</b>	-111	-100%
Rolled in grants	238.6	<b>0</b>	-238.6	-100%
Minimum Funding Guarantee	0	<b>136.0</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Core Spending Power</b>	<b>54,540.5</b>	<b>59,543.8</b>	<b>5,003.2</b>	<b>9.2%</b>

### 3.2 Council Tax

The Council Tax proposals set out in the Autumn Statement in November were confirmed as part of the settlement. The proposal for core Council Tax in 2023/24 is a referendum cap of up to 3% (previously 2%).

There is also the flexibility to add up to a further 2% adult social care precept for authorities providing adult social care services.

### 3.3 Improved Better Care Fund

Improved Better Care fund is unchanged in cash terms for all upper tier councils, with distribution also unchanged.

### 3.4 Social Care Grant

Social Care Grant will increase by £2,044.6m in 2023/24, with the additional amounts allocated as follows:

- £1,505.6m of additional grant funding.
- However, £161m of that is the rolling in of the Independent Living Fund.
- £400m for additional Improvement funding added to Market Sustainability grant.
- £300m for ringfenced Adult Social Care Discharge funding.

Allocations are related to the Adult Social Care needs formula with recognition of Social Care Council Tax precept and to previous market sustainability funding allocations. More detail will follow on additional reporting requirements, and the better care fund and discharge funding must be pooled with local health boards.

- 3.5 Lower Tier Services Grant**  
Introduced in 2021/22, the Lower Tier Services Grant will cease and therefore not be distributed to Local Authorities in 2023/24. The funding for this grant will instead be used to support the guaranteed 3% increase in Core Spending Power.
- 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 of New Homes Bonus, with the value previously representing legacy payments instead being used to support the 3% CSP increase referred to in paragraph 3.1.  
  
This results in a £265m (48%) reduction in the overall grant for 2023/24.
- 3.7 Services Grant**  
The overall value of this grant, first introduced in 2022/23, has reduced from £822m to £464m partly due to the removal of the National Insurance Levy which this grant previously included support for. The reduced amount will instead be used to enhance the Supporting Families Grant and to partially fund a contingency provision.
- 3.8 Public Health Grant**  
Information on the Public Health grant is not yet available and is expected in the new year.
- 3.9 Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund**  
This new grant totalling £562m includes £162m from the former Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund, with the additional £400m intended to support Local Authorities in making tangible improvements to adult social care and in particular to address discharge delays, social care waiting times, low fee rates, workforce pressures, and to promote technological innovation in the sector.
- 3.10 ASC Discharge Fund**  
This is a new £300m grant for 2023/24 and is intended to form part of Better Care Fund plans. It is aimed at reducing delayed transfers of care and has been allocated based on the improved Better Care Fund shares in used in 2023/24.
- 3.11 Minimum Funding Guarantee**  
A new funding stream will be distributed in 2023/24 to replace Lower Tier Services grant and is intended to provide a funding floor for all local authorities, so that no local authority would see an increase in Core Spending Power that is lower than 3% before Council Tax decisions. The total funding for this grant is £136m.
- 3.12 Funding Reform**  
Government has confirmed that reforms to local government funding through the Relative Review of Needs and Resources, as well as the reset of accumulated business rates growth have both been paused for the remainder of this Spending Review period, but they are “committed to improving the local government finance landscape in the next Parliament”.

## **4.0 WIRRAL COUNCIL IMPACT**

### **4.1 Council Tax**

Previous assumptions have been that a 2% Core increase and a 1% Social Care Precept would be applied. The confirmation of the 3% core referendum principal means a potential increase in Council Tax income of approximately £1.65m.

Similarly, an additional 1% Council Tax precept for Adult Social Care would generate an additional £1.65m. Both these figures are subject to confirmation of the Council Tax Base figure for 2023/24, which is due to be reported to Policy and Resources in January 2023.

Should these increases not be fully implemented, alternative savings of £3.3m will need to be found.

### **4.2 Social Care Grant**

Provisional allocations of the ringfenced Social Care Grant indicate that Wirral will receive £32.14m in 2023/24, which is an increase of £5.38m (including the Independent Living Fund) compared with previous 2023/24 assumptions included in the £38.4m budget gap.

However, as the Independent Living Fund has been rolled into the Social Care Grant there is a corresponding £1.52m pressure due to the removal of the grant from the revenue budget.

The net impact is therefore a £3.86m improvement on the MTFP.

### **4.3 Lower Tier Services Grant**

With confirmation being received that this grant will cease after 2022/23, this constitutes a £0.52m reduction in funding for Wirral from 2022/23 budget and previous 2023/24 assumptions.

### **4.4 New Homes Bonus**

It had previously been unsure if New Homes Bonus would continue after 2022/23, or if it would be distributed with the same methodology, and a reduction from the 2022/23 budget had therefore been assumed.

However, confirmation that the current New Homes Bonus approach would continue, and provisional allocations indicate Wirral will received £0.44m in 2023/24, an increase of £0.14m against previous assumptions.

### **4.5 Services Grant**

Previous forecasts had assumed a reduction of Services grant due to the removal of the National Insurance Levy. However, provisional allocations indicate Wirral will receive £3.16m for this grant, which is £0.75m less than anticipated.

### **4.6 Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund**

Provisional allocations allocate £4.22m of this fund to Wirral for 2023/24, which wasn't included in previous assumptions. However, although detailed conditions for this grant are not expected until early in 2023, at this stage it is assumed that this grant will be ringfenced and met with subsequent cost pressures and is therefore not an improvement to the overall budget position.

#### 4.7 **ASC Discharge Grant**

This new grant will form part of Better Care Fund plans and Wirral has been allocated £2.7m for 2023/24. This will be met by corresponding cost pressures and therefore does not impact the budget position.

#### 4.8 **Business Rates 100% Retention Pilot**

The settlement confirmed that the 100% Business Rates Retention pilot that Wirral participates in alongside Liverpool City Region authorities will continue in 2023/24 and will therefore continue to benefit from the resulting increased level of Business Rates receipts for another year. This was already budgeted for in the MTFP. This is positive news as Wirral benefits by approximately £7m per year as a result of participating in the pilot.

Government will review the role of such arrangements as a source of income for areas and its impact on local economic growth, and as part of deeper devolution commitments as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper.

#### 4.9 **Business Rates Top-up**

The latest assumptions were that the Business Rates Top-up would increase by 5% to £55.69m. Settlement confirms Wirral's 2023/24 allocation as £59.24m which is a 9.1% increase from 2022/23. This is an improvement of £3.55m and constitutes the following:

- 10.1% increase based on September 2022 CPI.
- An adjustment for the impact on Business Rates of the Revaluation 2023.

#### 4.10 MTFP Assumptions Comparison

In total, the provisional impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement on Wirral's MTFP is an improvement of £6.28m, not including the potential further Council Tax increases referenced in paragraph 4.1. The following table summarises the impact of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on Wirral Council's MTFP:

	2022/23 Budget £m	2023/24		
		MTFP assumption (£38.4m gap) £m	Provisional settlement £m	MTFP Impact £m
Business Rates Top-Up	(54.29)	(55.69)	(59.24)	(3.55)
New Homes Bonus	(0.44)	(0.30)	(0.44)	(0.14)
Social Care Grant	(19.77)	(26.77)	(32.15)	(5.38)*
Lower Tier Funding	(0.52)	(0.52)	0.00	0.52
2022/23 Services Grant	(5.62)	(3.91)	(3.16)	0.75
Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund	0.00	0.00	(4.22)	(4.22)*
ASC Discharge Fund	0.00	0.00	(2.70)	(2.70)*
<b>Funding impact of LGFS measures</b>				<b>(14.72)</b>
<b>Corresponding pressures:</b>				
Independent Living Fund removal			1.52	
Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund			4.22	
Discharge Fund			2.70	
<b>Additional cost pressures</b>				<b>8.44</b>
<b>Total provisional 2023/24 MTFP impact</b>				<b>(6.28)</b>
* Additional Adult Social Care related ringfenced grants				(12.30)

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 While the settlement brings an improvement to Wirral's MTFP position, the data outlined in this briefing note should be treated with caution as it is subject to change.
- 5.2 Firstly the settlement is provisional at this stage and is open to consultation until the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Following the closure of the consultation period the settlement is subject to Parliament approval, and as such the data outlined above is subject to change.
- 5.3 The impact of the Business Rates Revaluation 2023 on Business Rates income is at this stage unclear. The estimated income generated from Business Rates for 2023/24, 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, and as such the impact of Business Rates income on the MTFP 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 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and therefore this will not be confirmed until late January.
- 5.6 It is important to remember that the government have only impacted a single -year settlement and the additional resources for 2023/24 only provide limited and short-term certainty while creating uncertainty for longer term financial planning.

## Appendix 3 - List of Savings

Budget Saving Proposals can be placed into the following categories:

- Increasing Business Efficiencies
  - This approach will identify efficiency measures that will result in more effective ways in which services are currently provided and may include cost reduction.
- Increasing Income
  - The Council will look to identify areas where it can raise income through fees and charges.
- Changing how we fund or provide services
  - We aim to ensure that the right service reaches the right resident when and where they need it, for the best cost. This may mean changing how we fund or provide services so that we are able to reduce costs and maintain services by becoming more efficient and by doing things differently.
- Reducing or stopping services
  - Although all efforts will be made to keep service reduction to a minimum, the scale of the financial challenge means that not all reduction proposals can be avoided.

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY & TRANSPORT			
THEME	OPTION	DESCRIPTION	SAVING
<b>Increasing Income</b>	Introduction of Electric Vehicle charging scheme	Following a pilot, the Council is planning to introduce an electric vehicle charging policy and strategy that will introduce new charging points for electric vehicles generating a small income to the authority for re-investment.	£10,000
	Increase costs for Dropped Kerb service	The proposal would seek to increase the fees the Council applies to provide dropped kerbs outside people's houses to enable residents to access their drives. This will ensure full cost recovery to support the service.	£15,000
	Introduction of large format digital screen advertising opportunities	The Council plans to introduce large format, digital advertising screens in key gateway locations and small format free standing units in shopping areas to be used for commercial advertising to generate an income to the Council.	£20,000
	Review of Cemeteries and Crematoria service income	A review of income within Cemeteries and Crematoriums will look to increase income targets sustainable for future years.	£100,000
	Review of Pest Control service income	This option will increase the income target within the pest control team of Environmental Services in line with the recent demand for the service.	£10,000
	Review of bulky waste (ERIC) collections	The Bulky Waste collection service (ERIC service) currently collects up to 6 items for £32 per slot, with 120 slots available per week. The proposal is to reduce the number of items to 4 for £32 and increase the number of bookable slots by 5 per day - 145 per week.	£10,000

<b>Increasing Income</b>	Sale of Parks vehicles	A capital bid has been accepted for the procurement of new, efficient 'green' machinery. This saving would be achieved through the sale of the existing fleet, of which there are a number of vehicles that are high value.	£100,000
	Introduction of catering facilities at football playing fields	This option would see income generated through placement of outdoor catering pods at Arrowe Park Playing Fields and Levers Playing Fields to serve high footfall football traffic. A capital investment would be required.	£20,000
	Expansion of the camping offer at Wirral Country Park	This option would look to generate income through expanding the councils camping offer at Wirral Country Park.	£10,000
	Introduction of Pet Memorial Garden	This option would see an income generated through the development of a pet memorial garden for Wirral residents to commemorate their domestic pets.	£10,000
	Reintroduction of Christmas Markets at Birkenhead Park	This option would seek to restart Christmas Markets at Birkenhead Park. This model would see units / pitches being offered to traders who would pay a fee.	£10,000
	Introduction of an environmental enforcement scheme	This option proposes a move back to enforcement action against increasing levels of environmental crime including littering, dog fouling and fly tipping. The enforcement action will be undertaken by a 3rd party through an enforcement contract and would generate an income.	£150,000
<b>Increasing Business Efficiencies</b>	Capitalise Staff costs on infrastructure projects	A number of staff can be charged against the Council's capital programme budget leading to corresponding savings in the Council's revenue budget.	£60,000
	Review of Tree Management service	A redesign of the tree management service that will generate efficiency through the reduction of a vacant post and the generation of new income.	£50,000
	Restructure of the transport fleet	This option will deliver efficiencies through transport fleet and equipment remodelling and the introduction of replacement, alternative fuelled vehicles, and equipment.	£30,000
<b>Changing how we fund or provide services</b>	Environmental Health Service Review	A redesign of the Environmental Health Service to reduce the level of non-statutory provision and a reduction in staff by 1.5 FTE fixed term roles and 1 FTE permanent role.	£40,000
	Reduction in recycling promotional budget	This reflects a permanent, partial reduction of the Waste Team's recycling promotional budget from 2023/24.	£20,000
	Reduction in Waste & Environment Services budget	This option will make saving through partial reductions to elements of the Waste and Environmental Services budget.	£24,000

Reducing or stopping services	Reduction of non-statutory parks and countryside maintenance	The Parks and Countryside budget is approximately £4m. £3m of this is for statutory provision. Options have been brought forward to reduce the non-statutory element of the service by 50%.	£500,000
	Reduction in street cleansing	This option proposes the reduction in regular service street cleansing provision across the borough in residential areas, with a move to a reactive cleansing model. Cleansing would be undertaken in response to service requests and known hot spot/high demand locations. The service could still respond to fly tipping instances and service litter bins.	£500,000

TOURISM COMMUNITIES CULTURE & LEISURE			
THEME	OPTION	DESCRIPTION	SAVING
Increasing Income	Development of the events programme at Williamson Art Gallery	This option would look to generate income by developing the events programme at Williamson Art Gallery (weddings, formal dinners, birthday etc.). The option also includes savings from potential community asset transfer of the Transport Museum.	£70,000
	Review of current Neighbourhood Directorate assets/ buildings	This option would generate savings through a review of Neighbourhood Directorate assets, to identify properties/ buildings that could be considered for community asset transfer. There are currently no capital resources available from the Council in order to process CAT transfers.	£50,000
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Review of Neighbourhoods Staffing Structure	A re-structure in the Neighbourhoods Directorate that reflects a longer-term transformation plan to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective model of delivery.	£425,000
	Consolidation of under committed budgets across Neighbourhoods	This option will generate savings through a one-off collation of underspent budget lines across the service.	£60,000
	Leisure Centre service review	This saving option focuses on transformation of the service over 5-year period. The headline saving of £500k is for the first year's savings. This will focus on several key themes: energy efficiency measures, service restructures, contracts and commissioning arrangements and sales & marketing.	£500,000
Changing how we fund or provide services	Leisure Centre service review and closure of a council leisure centre	This saving option incorporates the transformation of the service saving of £500k along with the closure of one of the Council's leisure centres.	£1,000,000
	Reduce library service to 5 key sites	Wirral currently has 15 library sites. Footfall at all libraries has reduced and has not recovered from pre-pandemic levels. This option proposes a reduction in the service down to 5 sites.	£759,000

Changing how we fund or provide services	Relocation of Birkenhead & Wallasey Central libraries	This option proposes the relocation of Wirral's 2 Central libraries in Birkenhead and Wallasey from the two, current, high-cost sites into Birkenhead Town Hall and the Floral Pavilion respectively to reduce overall library service building running costs.	£280,000
	Reduce library service to 5 key sites & relocate central libraries	Wirral currently has 15 library sites. Footfall at all libraries has reduced and has not recovered from pre-pandemic levels. This option proposes a reduction in the service down to 5 sites as well as relocating Birkenhead and Wallasey sites into Birkenhead Town Hall and the Floral Pavilion.	£874,000
Reducing or stopping services	Temporary standing down of two council swimming pools	This proposal would involve standing down two of the Council's swimming pools to achieve savings in heating and running costs.	£850,000
	Closure of all non-statutory leisure services and activities	This option would involve stopping all Council leisure provision on the basis that it is a non-statutory, discretionary service that requires significant financial support from core Council budget which is forecast to increase further in 2023/24.	£4,900,000

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION			
THEME	OPTION	DESCRIPTION	SAVING
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Reduction in Wirral's Looked After Children numbers	This saving reflects a reduction in Wirral's Looked After Children numbers as historic high levels align more with other authorities following practice improvements since 2019.	£410,000
	Reduction in Teacher's pension liabilities to the council	This saving reflects a reduction in Teacher's pension liabilities for the Council.	£190,000
	Review of Supporting Families funding and Early Help budgets	The proposal will involve investing the supporting families funding and Early help budgets effectively to reduce CIN and CP demand. The outlook is of increasing demand on frontline services as things return to normal post covid.	£1,121,000
	Review of contracts within Children's Services	A review will be undertaken to look at all contracts that are in place across Children's Services to explore where there are any efficiencies which can be achieved.	£250,000
	Review of council's contribution towards European Funded Send Inclusion Programme	This saving reflects the end of the Council's contribution towards a European Funded programme that will end at the end of 2022/23.	£220,000
	Reduction in financial support to Kingsway High School	Kingsway High School is being re-purposed for other educational uses and as such the occupier will pay the proportionate liability associated with the PFI deal, which will reduce costs and generate a financial saving.	£134,000
Changing how we	Reduction in contributions to the Regional Adoption	This saving reflects a reduction in contributions to the Regional Adoption Agency in line with the	£100,000

	Agency in line with the average number of referrals	average number of referrals reducing in recent years.	
	Increase the number of <i>children looked after</i> placed in family settings as opposed to higher cost residential settings	This proposal involves increasing the proportion of children placed in family settings and less in other settings such as residential and semi-independent settings. As family-based settings are lower cost than residential settings there is a cost reduction for the Council.	£1,100,000
	Remodelling of social care and early help	The proposal will involve the redesign and restructure of the Assessment and Intervention Service in Children and Families and the Family Matters service to provide one single service.	£655,000
<b>Reducing or stopping services</b>	Removal of budget supporting Play Services schemes	Wirral currently has 3 of out of hours and weekend play schemes. This service, which employs 9 staff, supports child development and education through play and is non-statutory. Play services currently operate at: Leasowe Adventure Playground, Gautby Play Scheme, Beechwood Play scheme as they are targeted in areas of greatest need. The option would remove this service altogether.	£284,000
	Reduction of Youth services offer to minimum statutory service	This service, which employs 68 staff, includes a youth club provision in each of the 9 neighbourhoods, detached youth workers covering the borough, and an annual contribution to the Hive Youth Zone. A number of options have been brought forward to reduce the service. This option would see the service being reduced to a statutory minimum provision.	£666,000
	Removal of budget supporting Creative Youth offer	Creative Youth Development employs 10 staff and delivers targeted packages of support to young people in crisis or with special educational needs and disabilities using a range of creative arts as therapeutic tools. The service is non-statutory, and options have been brought forward to reduce the service. This option would involve the service stopping altogether.	£343,000

THEME	OPTION	DESCRIPTION	SAVING
Changing how we fund or provide services	Review of all-age disability transition planning	This programme will focus on transition planning to better prepare young people with care and health needs for adulthood through tailored and more creative approaches to meeting care and support needs. A review of practice and approaches to transition planning will see needs identified earlier, with planned care and support leading to the delivery of the efficiency target.	£1,000,000
	Review of services to support Independent Living	A range of Demand Management initiatives will deliver the required efficiency savings. These are related to technology enabled care provision, increasing take up of Direct Payments as a cost-effective way to meet people's needs, utilising an increased range of extra care and supported housing options, and continuing to embed The Three Conversations approach to requests for care and support.	£4,935,000

ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING			
THEME	OPTION	DESCRIPTION	SAVING
Increasing Income	One off rental income for partial leasing of Cheshire Lines office space	The NHS CCG will be occupying some of the space in Cheshire Lines Building and paying a contribution towards the lease and running of costs. As the lease on Cheshire Lines is due to end in April 2024, this is a one year only income for 23-24.	£146,000
	Lease income from rental of floors 4 & 5 at Marris House	The Council had leased the 4th and 5th Floors of Marris House, with the break clause having been implemented and the lease terminated in July 22. Any make good work on the return of the lease have been met from the 22/23-part year saving on the lease costs. Full savings will be achievable for 23-24.	£136,000
	Increase eligible rechargeable costs for Building Control services	This option would generate income through increasing the eligible rechargeable costs in the areas of building control and housing services and is based on the assumptions on what can be recharged to fee income in the areas of building control, street names and numbering and land charges.	£80,000
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Review of Merseytravel levy budget	The Merseytravel levy is set by the Combined Authority, which includes any changes identified in the City Region population levels and demographics. This option will realise a saving through the financial difference between the budget set for the levy and the actual levy cost.	£122,000
	Capitalisation of salaries (Re-direction of qualifying salaries away from the council's central budget	This proposal will include a change to re-direct qualifying salaries away from the council's central budget. This will apply to staff within Assets division work on the school's capital programme, which enhances and creates schools' assets and is funded via grant.	£85,000
Increasing Business Efficiency	Stand down and disposal of a number of council owned buildings	This option is a continuation of a project that was commissioned in 2019 to review the accommodation strategy of the Council. Savings will be made on the	£672,000

		assumption that the buildings will all be empty, and functions “stood down” completed by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021 and disposed of no later than 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023.	
	Decommissioning of the Solar Campus site and relocation of teams currently working from the facility.	This option will see a partial in-year saving through decommissioning of the Solar Campus and relocation of teams currently working from the facility. Full stand down savings will be realised in 24/25.	£5,000
	Standing down of Wallasey Town Hall for a 12-month period	In 2023/24, the North and South Annexes are being demolished and this will effectively put the Town Hall between two demolition sites for most of the year. This will have practical implications on the use of, and access to the building. Savings will therefore be realised through the standing down of Wallasey Town Hall for 2023/24.	£400,000
	redesign and review of contract commissioning for Economic Growth	This option will see savings made through the redesign of the specification for services completed prior to commissioning and the subsequent competitive price achieved through tendering.	£65,000
	Recharging of staff costs where eligible grant funding is in place for Economic Growth projects	This option will see a one-off saving of staff cost recovery from grant funding. This relates to eligible work across several regeneration programmes where a proportion of permanent staffing costs can be recharged for staffing time including European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and Town Deal.	£71,500
	Recharging of staff costs where eligible grant funding is in place for Homes for Ukraine Resettlement Programme	This option will see a one-off saving of staff cost recovery from grant funding. This relates to eligible work undertaken for the Resettlement Programme associated with responding to the Homes for Ukraine.	£593,110
	Recharging of costs where eligible grant and fee income is rechargeable within Supported Housing services	This option would realise savings where grant and fee income are rechargeable. This includes eligible costs associated with Private Rented Sector Housing Licensing, the Healthy Homes service and works linked to the Disabled Facilities Grant.	£59,600
Changing how we fund or provide services	Re-provision of homeless accommodation and review of community alarm grant	This option is a follow on from savings implemented in 22/23 that can again be realised in 23/24 – this being re-provision of homeless accommodation and review of grant to current eligible customers for the community alarm/response services charges.	£137,000
	Review of Housing Support service and Fuel Poverty contract	This proposal will realise efficiencies by moving to a single low level floating housing support service, as well as a review of the Fuel Poverty contract.	£87,500

## POLICY AND RESOURCES

THEME	OPTION	DESCRIPTION	SAVING
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<b>Increasing Business Efficiencies</b>	Review of digital systems within the Revenue and Benefits service	This option will generate efficiencies through increased use of automation within Revenues & Benefits reducing the need for double keying and manual intervention from staff.	£100,000
	Review of council funded trade union representatives	The Council currently funds salaries for four full time trade union reps for UNISON. Funding was in place initially for three reps, but this was increased to a fourth, on a temporary basis, during the pandemic and been absorbed into the core budget. This option will realise a saving by returning to financially supporting just three full reps.	£35,000
	Review of current payroll functions	This option will realise saving through a review of the council's current payroll functions in order to reduce duplication and increase efficiencies.	£60,000
	Review of enabling (back office) services across the council	This option will bring forward a review of all enabling (back office) services across the whole organisation to identify economies of scale and opportunities for greater centralisation of these services.	£2,300,000
	Review of senior management structure	This option brings forward a package of senior management savings across the whole organisation to be achieved primarily through vacancy management.	£800,000
<b>Reducing or stopping services</b>	Corporate Office Restructure	This option will generate efficiencies and reduction in budget through a re-structure of the PA hub, which takes account of the changes in duties arising within this cohort since the move to remote and hybrid working. The review is inextricably linked with the review of the Chief Officer structure.	£70,000
<b>Increasing Business Efficiencies</b>	Use of NNDR reserve - one off	Use of the residual sum of £3m to balance budget shortfall.	£3,000,000
	Insurance reserve - one off	Following a review of Insurance Reserves, a figure of £1m can be release on one off basis.	£1,000,000
	Reprice pay budgets at mid-point	To this point council pay budgets have been costed at highest spinal point. This adjustment re-costs pay budget at mid-point which is normal for the sector and appropriate of pay commitments of this council.	£2,800,000
	Apply vacancy factor to pay budgets	A vacancy factor has been calculated in detail for each directorate of the council.	£2,300,000
	Council wide budget adjustment	Adjust operational budgets applying a factor of tenth of 1%	£440,000

<b>Increasing Income</b>	DSG contribution to statutory functions	This was a correction of the previous base estimate.	£1,200,000
	Increase Council Tax / ASC Levy by 2% to a total of 4.99%	Council Tax increase beyond base assumption	£3,260,000

## **1.0 Wirral ‘Have Your Say’ Consultation**

1.1 The approach to the initial consultation was twofold; firstly, in terms of service impact consultation (where a budget option has a direct impact on reducing the level of provision of a specific service) and secondly, to gauge the opinions and priorities of our residents as to what council services matter most to them, and where they believe the council should be focusing its efforts to help develop the budget plan – this was presented via an online budget simulator.

1.2 Both were delivered through the council’s ‘Have Your Say’ platform in the form of a ‘Hub’. This approach provided users with one single location through which to engage in the service consultations and participate in the budget simulator exercise. <https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/hub-page/budget-2023-24>

Projects within the Hub include:

1. Street Cleansing Budget Option
2. Library Services Budget Option
3. Leisure Services Budget Option
4. Parks & Countryside Budget Option
5. Youth Services Budget Option
6. Budget Simulator

1.3 To ensure the consultations were as accessible as possible, a social and digital 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. communication channels included (but not limited to):

1. Social media messaging across a variety of platforms
2. Dedicated email address (for comments, ideas, request for paper copies etc)
3. Paper copies in libraries and leisure centres
4. WirralView news channel – article and links
5. Links and details in weekly Resident E-Newsletter
6. Digital and social links to the ‘Have Your Say’ Hub
7. Online redirection through local news platforms
8. Council website notices
9. Internal / Staff communications
10. Local media briefing/ media management
11. Member briefing
12. Sharing of links and paper copy locations with CVF sector

**\*The following data and findings are true as of 5.1.22. Consultation remains live at this date.**

1.4 Parks and Countryside <https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-parks>

At present, the online consultation has engaged 484 respondents\*. Users were asked their opinion on:

1. A 50% reduction in the maintenance budget (effecting non-statutory works at a selection of parks across the parks and countryside services estate).

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 80% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 6% neutral
- c. 14% Strongly agree/agree

2. A 25% reduction in the maintenance budget (effecting non-statutory works at a smaller selection of parks across the parks and countryside services estate).

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 64% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 7% neutral
- c. 29% Strongly agree/agree

An open question is also included for respondents to register qualitative feedback.

#### 1.5 **Leisure Services** <https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-leisure-services>

At present, the online consultation has engaged 453 respondents\*. Users were asked their opinion on:

1. A Discontinuation to provide Leisure Services across the borough.

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 86% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 3% neutral
- c. 11% Strongly agree/agree

2. The Possible closure of two swimming pools

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 56% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 7% neutral
- c. 37% Strongly agree/agree

3. A reduction in the number of leisure centre sites the council owns and manages.

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 53% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 9% neutral
- c. 38% Strongly agree/agree

An open question is also included for respondents to register qualitative feedback.

#### 1.6 **Library Services** <https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-leisure-services>

At present, the online consultation has engaged 459 respondents\*. Users were asked their opinion on:

1. A relocation of the council's two biggest and most expensive library sites to operate, Birkenhead Central and Wallasey Central libraries.

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 46% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 7% neutral
- c. 47% Strongly agree/agree

2. Reducing the size of the library service to provide a small number of key, geographically located sites, supported by a wide-ranging online, digital and mobile library offer.

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 58% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 7% neutral
- c. 35% Strongly agree/agree

3. The moving of some library sites into other council buildings, reducing the overall number of library sites it currently provides. (Retaining an online and digital service and deploying a mobile library service).

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 40% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 8% neutral
- c. 52% Strongly agree/agree

An open question is also included for respondents to register qualitative feedback.

#### 1.7 **Street Cleansing** [https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-street-cleansing/survey\\_tools/budget-2023-24-street-cleansing](https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-street-cleansing/survey_tools/budget-2023-24-street-cleansing)

At present, the online consultation has engaged 322 respondents\*. Users were asked their opinion on:

1. Moving to a reactive model of street cleaning (cleansing undertaken in response to service requests and in known hot spot/ high demand locations).

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 54% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 10% neutral
- c. 36% Strongly agree/agree

2. A reduction in cleansing schedules would see a move from 4-weekly to 12-weekly cleansing schedules across the whole borough (retaining 4-weekly alleyway cleanse service.)

*Current sentiment:*

- a. 56% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 9% neutral
- c. 35% Strongly agree/agree

An open question is also included for respondents to register qualitative feedback.

1.8 **Youth Services Street Cleansing** [https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-youth-services/survey\\_tools/budget-2023-24-youth-services](https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-youth-services/survey_tools/budget-2023-24-youth-services)

In order to increase and ensure engagement for Wirral's under 18 residents, a Microsoft Forms version of the consultation was produced. Preliminary findings below will therefore reflect both versions.

At present, the online consultation has engaged 151 respondents through the 'Have Your Say'(HYS) hub, and 740 through the MS Forms (MSF) channel.\* Users were asked their opinion on:

1. The closure of Pilgrim Street Arts Centre and re-provision of services to either an 'outreach' or 'pop-up' offer.

*Current sentiment: (HYS)*

- a. 67% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 10% neutral
- c. 23% Strongly agree/agree

*Current sentiment: (MSF)*

- a. 69% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 10% neutral
- c. 21% Strongly agree/agree

2. The removal of the Play Services budget.

*Current sentiment: (HYS)*

- a. 62% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 7% neutral
- c. 31% Strongly agree/agree

*Current sentiment: (MSF)*

- a. 78% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 4% neutral
- c. 18% Strongly agree/agree

3. The reduction of the council's Youth Services offer.

*Current sentiment: (HYS)*

- a. 72% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 6% neutral
- c. 22% Strongly agree/agree

*Current sentiment: (MSF)*

- a. 80% Strongly disagree/disagree
- b. 5% neutral
- c. 15% Strongly agree/agree

An open question is also included for respondents to register qualitative feedback.

1.9 **Budget Simulator** <https://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/budget-2023-24-simulator>

The budget simulator is easy to use and allows residents to reduce spending across council services and see the consequences of their choices. There is also opportunity to provide comments, which will help us understand what is important when we come to set a legal budget.

At present, the online simulator has engaged 640 respondents\*

The below chart indicates the average expenditure change for each slider reflecting resident priorities:

<b>Adult Social Care &amp; Health</b>	
Adult Social Care commissioned services	-20.70%
<b>Children, Families &amp; Education</b>	
Early Help & Prevention	-13.63%
Education & Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support	-12.11%
Children's Social Care & Safeguarding	-9.45%
<b>Neighbourhood Services</b>	
Community Safety	-18.09%
Highways and Infrastructure	-18.91%
Leisure, Libraries & Customer Engagement	-24.06%
Parks & Environment	-23.24%
<b>Resources</b>	
Revenues & Benefits	-25.35%
<b>Regeneration</b>	
Regeneration	-26.05%
Housing	-20.78%
Planning	-29.26%
<b>Support Services</b>	
Support Services	-28.40%



24 JANUARY 2023

## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF STANDARDS (UPDATED) – PROVISIONAL OUTCOMES FOR KEY STAGE 4</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

The Standards 2022 report update gives information about the provisional pupil outcomes. There is an executive summary followed by a detailed analysis for the pupil outcomes, this is the second report this academic year with this report focusing on Key Stage 4 (16 years old).

Comparisons have been made with the results nationally wherever possible. However, many of the national results have not been published yet, this will be published towards the end of January. This report provides a detailed analysis of pupil outcomes and gives a first indication of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of young people. Key Stage 4 outcomes, unlike primary school outcomes have been published nationally, allowing for easier comparison locally.

It is important that we do not compare this year's results to previous years, as those outcomes will be pre-pandemic. That said, national comparisons will be able to be used to identify the areas Wirral must prioritise over the next 12 months. The standards report and educational outcomes will be linked to the refresh of the priorities in relation to the school improvement strategy that was shared with committee in December and the re-banding of schools across Wirral to identify needing support.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and the actions taken link to the Wirral plan 2021-2026 – Brighter Futures

This is not a key decision.

### RECOMMENDATION/S

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

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) support the Services' planned refresh of the school improvement strategy based on the outcomes outlined.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

- 1.1 The Standards 2022 update report has been produced to evaluate the impact of the education system to support young people, specifically in relation to secondary outcomes. The analysis will be linked to the next steps in relation to school improvement over the next 12 to 18 months. The report will be shared with headteachers and used as an essential tool to challenge underperformance as well as celebrate successes/improvements in Wirral schools.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 We could do nothing but in response to outcomes it is appropriate to reassess and refresh the school improvement strategy to reflect this as per the committee report shared in December.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The provisional data is scrutinised to determine where there have been improvements and where standards have deteriorated. The data is analysed at a local authority level, locality level based on the 4 district models across Wirral. In addition, further scrutiny takes place using pupil characteristics, to determine underachievement and key areas for development.
- 3.2 This specific cohort that is covered within this report, will have been in year 9 at the time of the national lockdown in March 2020.
- 3.3 In addition, it is important to consider the educational experiences for young people across Wirral for the last two and a half years, many children will have experienced significant periods of home learning and others have anxiety as they returned to the school environment. In addition, young people sitting GCSE assessments will not have had the usual experience in relation to experiencing GCSE exams and the preparation processes to make the system familiar for young people.
- 3.4 The key difference between the September standards report and this analysis, is the opportunity to analyse at the locality and school level. This was not possible in the primary assessment report due to outcomes for schools not being published. Given the structure of secondary schools across Wirral, it is important to be able to assess the outcomes of young people in the localities they reside.
- 3.5 The approach taken is different from previous, the locality analysis used only includes pupils who attend a Wirral school and have a Wirral post code are identified in the locality analysis. This approach allows support to be linked on a locality approach not just school specific. In addition, this should allow strengthen support for transition for young people moving from primary to secondary school.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

- 6.1 The Standards 2022 reports are key documents used to implement the Wirral Schools strategy 2021-2024. The necessary challenge to underperforming schools is coordinated in partnership by the Head of School Effectiveness and three Senior School Advisors combined with support from external School Assurance Professionals.
- 6.2 School can access additional resource from the local authority if specific areas of improvement are identified and they do not have the financial capacity to support the relevant activity.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The Corporate Risk Register has been refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan 2021-2026 to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.
- 7.2 The outcomes of Wirral's young people need to be aligned to the refreshed Wirral school improvement strategy. If young people do not achieve the expected educational outcomes this could impact on progression into further employment and training.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The reports will be shared with all headteachers in January 2023. The Challenge Partnership Board will review any work commissioned to improve standards in schools identified as underperforming. Discussion in relation to the best mechanisms for support will be discussed with the Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers.

## **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. An EIA will be completed in line with the refresh of the school improvement strategy.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 It is important the educational outcomes are analysed to support the local authority to prioritise its resources in the relevant areas. This will support improving outcomes for young people, allowing them to be more successful and links to the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 – Bright futures for all young people.

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## APPENDICES

Wirral Standards Report (updated) 2022  
Wirral education glossary

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Wirral School Improvement Strategy update 2021-2024](#)

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with paragraphs A and F of its Terms of Reference: 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, and; providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Children's, Families and Education committee</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2022</b>
<b>Children's and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> September 2019</b>

## **Executive Summary**

***Locality figures are calculated from pupil postcode, not school location. Only pupils with Wirral postcodes included in the locality groups.***

***Wirral figures for National comparison and school comparison includes all Wirral school pupils with key stage four attainment data. Comparison has been made between 2022 and 2019. It should be noted that any comparison with 2019 data should be caveated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a better yearly comparison will be available from 2023 results.***

***(December 2022)***

### **Key Stage Four – provisional outcomes**

#### **Wirral LA overall analysis**

The attainment 8 gap for Wirral in 21/22 vs national is 0, with both scores being 48.7. In relation to English and Maths 9-4, Wirral has a gap of 3.2%, with the national average being 68.6% and the Wirral average being 65.4%. In relation to English and Maths 9-5, the gap is narrower at 2.4%, with the national average being 49.6% and the Wirral outcome being 47.2%. In relation to progress 8, the Wirral gap is again 0, with the national and Wirral figure both being -0.03. (Appendix 21)

In relation to comparison with 18/19, Wirral's attainment score has increased from 48.4 to 48.7, an increase of 0.03. In relation to 9-4 English and Maths the outcome is decreased slightly from 65.5% to 65.4%, a decrease of 0.01%. For 9-5 English and Maths, the outcome has increased from 45.6% to 47.2%, an increase of 1.6%. Finally in relation to progress 8, the score has slightly decreased from 0.01 to -0.03, a decrease of 0.04. (Appendix 21)

#### **Attainment 8 summary**

##### **Locality Overall**

Wirral South has the highest average attainment 8 score in 2022 with 54.66, 1.02 higher than Wirral West with 53.64. Wirral South attainment 8 score is 11.14 higher than the lowest Wirral locality attainment 8 score of Wallasey with 43.52. (Appendix 1)

##### **Locality Characteristics**

###### **Birkenhead**

In Birkenhead, the attainment 8 score of those with an EHCP has decreased 1.45 to 13.81. The non-SEN attainment 8 score decreased 0.14 to 47.73. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased by 1.31 to 33.93. (Appendix 5)

In Birkenhead, the attainment 8 score of EAL has increased 6.33 to 50.54. The non-EAL attainment 8 score decreased 0.58 to 43.09. The gap between EAL and Non-EAL decreased by 6.91, and EAL are outperforming non-EAL by 7.45. (Appendix 5)

### Wallasey

In Wallasey, the attainment 8 score of those with an EHCP has decreased 3.25 to 7.93. The non-SEN attainment 8 score decreased 0.17 to 47.46. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased by 3.08 to 39.53. (Appendix 6)

In Wallasey, the attainment 8 score of EAL has decreased 8.4 to 57.7. The non-EAL attainment 8 score decreased 0.10 to 43.05. The gap between EAL and Non-EAL decreased by 8.3, and EAL are outperforming non-EAL by 14.64. (Appendix 6)

### Wirral South

In Wirral South, the attainment 8 score of those with an EHCP has decreased 7.97 to 14.17. The non-SEN attainment 8 score increased 0.84 to 58.19. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased by 8.8 to 44.01. (Appendix 7)

In Wirral South, the attainment 8 score of FSM eligible has increased 0.47 to 38.63. The non-FSM Eligible attainment 8 score increased 2.16 to 57.93. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible increased by 1.69 to 19.3. (Appendix 7)

### Wirral West

In Wirral West, the attainment 8 score of those with an EHCP has increased 8.16 to 21.12. The non-SEN attainment 8 score increased 0.66 to 56.2. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN decreased by 7.49 to 35.08. (Appendix 8)

In Wirral West, the attainment 8 score of males has increased 2.97 to 52.69. The female attainment 8 score decreased 1.5 to 54.61. The gap between males and females decreased by 4.48 to 1.92. (Appendix 8)

### **National Comparison 2019 and 2022**

In 2019 Wirral females' attainment 8 score was 0.8 higher than national at 51.3, whereas in 2022 Wirral females attainment 8 score is 0.5 higher than national at 51.8. In 2019 Wirral males' attainment 8 score was 1.4 higher than national at 45.4, whereas in 2022 Wirral males attainment 8 score is 0.4 lower than national with 45.8. (Appendix 21) Overall in 2022 Wirral are the same as National with 48.7.

### **Non-Selective Schools**

43%, or 6 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their attainment 8 score in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably Hilbre High School whose attainment 8 score has increased 5.6 to 44.3 in 2022, and Co-op Academy Bebington who increased 5.5 to 42.1 in 2022. (Appendix 22)

Birkenhead High School Academy has the highest attainment 8 score of 50.4 in 2022, 6.2 higher than the National non-selective school average attainment 8 score of 44.2 in 2022. (Appendix 22)

26%, or 5 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school average attainment 8 score. (Appendix 22)

### **Selective Schools**

100%, or 7 out of 7 Wirral selective schools have increased their attainment 8 score in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably Upton Hall School whose attainment 8 score has increased 4.1 to 68.3 in 2022, and Wirral Grammar School for Girls who increased 4.2 to 75.7 in 2022. (Appendix 23)

Wirral Grammar School for Girls has the highest attainment 8 score of 75.7 in 2022, 1.6 higher than the National selective school average attainment 8 score of 74.1 in 2022. (Appendix 23)

Wirral Grammar School for Girls was the only Wirral selective school higher than the national selective school average attainment 8 score of 74.1. (Appendix 23)

### **Progress 8**

#### **Locality Overall**

Wirral West has the highest average progress 8 score in 2022 with 0.33, 0.02 higher than Wirral South with 0.31. Wirral West progress 8 score is 0.68 higher than the lowest Wirral locality progress 8 score of Wallasey with -0.37. (Appendix 2)

#### **Locality Characteristics**

##### **Birkenhead**

In Birkenhead, the progress 8 score of those with an EHCP has increased 0.05 to -1.14. The non-SEN progress 8 score decreased 0.17 to -0.15. The gap between EHCP and non-SEN decreased by 0.22 to 0.99. (Appendix 9)

In Birkenhead, the progress 8 score of disadvantaged has decreased 0.2 to -0.81. The non-disadvantaged progress 8 score decreased 0.15 to 0.07. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged increased by 0.05 to 0.69 (Appendix 9)

##### **Wallasey**

In Wallasey, the progress 8 score of those with an EHCP has decreased 0.55 to -1.89. The non-SEN progress 8 score decreased 0.06 to 0.25. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased by 0.49 to 1.64. (Appendix 10)

In Wallasey, the progress 8 score of FSM eligible has decreased 0.03 to -0.82. The non-FSM eligible progress 8 score increased 0.01 to -0.15. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible increased by 0.05 to 0.68. (Appendix 10)

##### **Wirral South**

In Wirral South, the progress 8 score of those not white British has increased 0.09 to 0.98. The white British progress 8 score decreased 0.07 to 0.27. The gap between not white British and white British decreased by 0.16 to 0.71. (Appendix 11)

In Wirral South, the progress 8 score of FSM eligible has decreased 0.02 to -0.47. The non-FSM Eligible progress 8 score increased 0.02 to 0.47. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible increased by 1.69 to 19.3. (Appendix 11)

### Wirral West

In Wirral West, the progress 8 score of those with an EHCP has increased 0.12 to -0.85. The non-SEN progress 8 score increased 0.07 to 0.41. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased by 0.20 to 0.95. (Appendix 12)

In Wirral West, the progress 8 score of males has increased 0.24 to 0.23. The female progress 8 score decreased 0.09 to 0.45. The gap between males and females decreased by 0.33 to 0.22. (Appendix 12)

### **National Comparison 2019 and 2022**

In 2019 Wirral females progress 8 score was 0.09 higher than national at 0.31, whereas in 2022 Wirral females progress 8 score is 0.04 higher than national at 0.19. In 2019 Wirral males progress 8 score was the same as national at -0.27, whereas in 2022 Wirral males progress 8 score is 0.04 lower than national with -0.25. (Appendix 21) Overall in 2022 Wirral are the same as National with -0.03.

### **Non-Selective Schools**

43%, or 6 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their progress 8 score in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably Co-op Academy Bebington whose progress 8 score has increased 0.37 to -0.04 in 2022, and Hilbre High School who increased 0.16 to 0.14 in 2022. (Appendix 22)

Birkenhead High School Academy has the highest progress 8 score of 0.3 in 2022, 0.5 higher than National non-selective school average progress 8 score of -0.2 in 2022. (Appendix 22)

57%, or 8 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school average progress 8 score. (Appendix 22)

### **Selective Schools**

83%, or 5 out of 6 Wirral selective schools have increased their progress 8 score in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably St Anselm's College whose progress 8 score has increased 0.21 to 0.16 in 2022, and Wirral Grammar School for Girls who increased 0.22 to 1 in 2022. (Appendix 23)

Wirral Grammar School for Girls has the highest progress 8 score of 1 in 2022, 0.42 higher than National selective school average progress 8 score of 0.58 in 2022. (Appendix 23)

17%, or 2 out of 6 Wirral selective schools are higher than the national selective school average progress 8 score. (Appendix 23)

## **English and Maths 9-4 %**

### **Locality Overall**

Wirral West has the highest English and Maths 9-4 % in 2022 with 76%, 2% higher than Wirral South with 74%. Wirral West English and Maths 9-4 % is 21% higher than the lowest Wirral locality English and Maths 9-4 % of Wallasey with 55%. (Appendix 3)

### **Locality Characteristics**

#### **Birkenhead**

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-4 % of disadvantaged has increased 5% to 42%. The non-disadvantaged English and Maths 9-4 % stayed the same at 70%. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged decreased by 6% to 28%. (Appendix 13)

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-4 % of FSM eligible has increased 7% to 41%. The non-FSM eligible English and Maths 9-4 % increased 4% to 68%. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible decreased by 3% to 28% (Appendix 13)

#### **Wallasey**

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-4 % of those with an EHCP has decreased 3% to 2%. The non-SEN English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 4% to 62%. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN decreased by 4% to 62%. (Appendix 14)

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-4 % of FSM eligible has decreased 3% to 33%. The non-FSM eligible English and Maths 9-4 % increased 2% to 66%. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible increased by 5% to 33%. (Appendix 14)

#### **Wirral South**

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-4 % of disadvantaged has decreased 3% to 45%. The non-disadvantaged English and Maths 9-4 % stayed the same at 82%. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged increased by 3% to 37%. (Appendix 15)

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-4 % of EAL has increased 31% to 100%. The non-EAL English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 2% to 74%. The gap between EAL and non-EAL decreased by 33% so EAL outperform non-EAL by 26%. (Appendix 15)

#### **Wirral West**

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-4 % of those with an EHCP has increased 5% to 10%. The non-SEN English and Maths 9-4 % increased 1% to 81%. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN decreased by 4% to 71%. (Appendix 16)

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-4 % of males has increased 2% to 74%. The female English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 1% to 81%. The gap between males and females decreased by 3% to 3%. (Appendix 16)

### **National Comparison 2019 and 2022**

In 2019 Wirral females English and Maths 9-4 % was 1% higher than national at 69.4%, whereas in 2022 Wirral females English and Maths 9-4 % is 3.5% lower than national at 67.9%. In 2019 Wirral males English and Maths 9-4 % was 0.6% higher than national at 61.6%, whereas in 2022 Wirral males English and Maths 9-4 % is 2.9% lower than national with 63.1%. (Appendix 21) Overall in 2022 Wirral are 3.2% lower than National with 65.4%.

### **Non-Selective Schools**

50%, or 7 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-4 % in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably Co-op Academy Bebington whose English and Maths 9-4 % has increased 16.5% to 56.9% in 2022, and Ridgeway High School who increased 11.7% to 51.8% in 2022. (Appendix 22)

Birkenhead High School Academy has the highest English and Maths 9-4 % of 70.1% in 2022, 8.3% higher than the National non-selective school English and Maths 9-4 % of 61.8% in 2022. (Appendix 22)

36%, or 5 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school English and Maths 9-4 %. (Appendix 22)

### **Selective Schools**

50%, or 3 out of 6 Wirral selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-4 % in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably West Kirby Grammar School whose English and Maths 9-4 % has increased 1.3% to 100% in 2022, and Wirral Grammar School for Boys who increased 1.2% to 100% in 2022. (Appendix 23)

Both West Kirby Grammar School and Wirral Grammar School for Boys have the highest English and Maths 9-4 % of 100% in 2022, 1.8% higher than the National selective school English and Maths 9-4 % of 98.2% in 2022. (Appendix 23)

50%, or 3 out of 6 Wirral selective schools are higher than the national selective school English and Maths 9-4 %. (Appendix 23)

### **English and Maths 9-5%**

#### **Locality Overall**

Both Wirral West and Wirral South have the highest English and Maths 9-5 % in 2022, both with 58%. Both Wirral West and Wirral South English and Maths 9-5 % are 22% higher than the lowest Wirral locality English and Maths 9-5 % of Wallasey with 36%. (Appendix 4)

## **Locality Characteristics**

### **Birkenhead**

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-5 % of disadvantaged has increased 5% to 22%. The non-disadvantaged English and Maths 9-5 % increased 2% to 49%. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged decreased by 4% to 27%. (Appendix 17)

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-5 % of FSM eligible has increased 6% to 22%. The non-FSM eligible English and Maths 9-5 % increased 5% to 46%. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible decreased by 1% to 24% (Appendix 17)

### **Wallasey**

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-5 % of males has decreased 1% to 30%. The female English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 2% to 43%. The gap between males and females decreased by 1% to 13%. (Appendix 18)

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-5 % of FSM eligible has decreased 5% to 15%. The non-FSM eligible English and Maths 9-5 % increased 3% to 46%. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible increased by 7% to 31%. (Appendix 18)

### **Wirral South**

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-5 % of disadvantaged has increased 3% to 27%. The non-disadvantaged English and Maths 9-5 % stayed the same at 65%. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged decreased by 2% to 39%. (Appendix 19)

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-5 % of those with EHCP has decreased 9% to 4%. The non-SEN English and Maths 9-5 % increased 1% to 63%. The gap between EHCP and non-SEN increased by 10% to 59%. (Appendix 19)

### **Wirral West**

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-5 % of those with an EHCP has increased 5% to 10%. The non-SEN English and Maths 9-5 % increased 4% to 81%. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN decreased by 4% to 71%. (Appendix 20)

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-5 % of males has increased 6% to 57%. The female English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 1% to 58%. The gap between males and females decreased by 7% to 1%. (Appendix 20)

## **National Comparison 2019 and 2022**

In 2019 Wirral females English and Maths 9-5 % was 3.2% higher than national at 49.8%, whereas in 2022 Wirral females English and Maths 9-5 % is 2.4% lower than national at 50.1%. In 2019 Wirral males English and Maths 9-5 % was 1.4% higher than national at 41.4%, whereas in 2022 Wirral males English and Maths 9-5 % is 2.5% lower than national with 44.3%. (Appendix 21) Overall in 2022 Wirral are 2.4% lower than National with 47.2%.

### **Non-Selective Schools**

50%, or 7 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-5 % in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably Co-op Academy Bebington whose English and Maths 9-5 % has increased 18% to 34.8% in 2022, and Ridgeway High School who increased 13.7% to 32.7% in 2022. (Appendix 22)

Prenton High School for Girls has the highest English and Maths 9-5 % of 43.5% in 2022, 4.9% higher than the National non-selective school English and Maths 9-5 % of 38.6% in 2022. (Appendix 22)

29%, or 4 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school English and Maths 9-5 %. (Appendix 22)

### **Selective Schools**

83%, or 5 out of 6 Wirral selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-5 % in 2022 in comparison to 2019. Most notably Wirral Grammar School for Girls whose English and Maths 9-5 % has increased 5.4% to 98.3% in 2022, and St Anselm's College who increased 4.7% to 79.3% in 2022. (Appendix 23)

Wirral Grammar School for Girls has the highest English and Maths 9-5 % of 98.3% in 2022, 4.1% higher than the National selective school English and Maths 9-5 % of 94.2% in 2022. (Appendix 23)

17%, or 1 out of 6 Wirral selective schools are higher than the national selective school English and Maths 9-5 %. (Appendix 23)

### **Stand out Locality characteristics**

EAL and non-white British consistently outperformed non-EAL and white British by a large margin. Except in Wirral West where EAL Attainment 8 score decreased by 8.32 to 50.8 and non-EAL increased 0.90 to 53.63, outperforming EAL by 2.83. In Wirral West, the EAL Progress 8 score decreased 0.90 to 0.02 and non-EAL increased 0.09 to 0.34, outperforming EAL by 0.34. In Wirral West, the EAL English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 20% to 60% and non-EAL increased 1% to 76%, outperforming EAL by 16%.

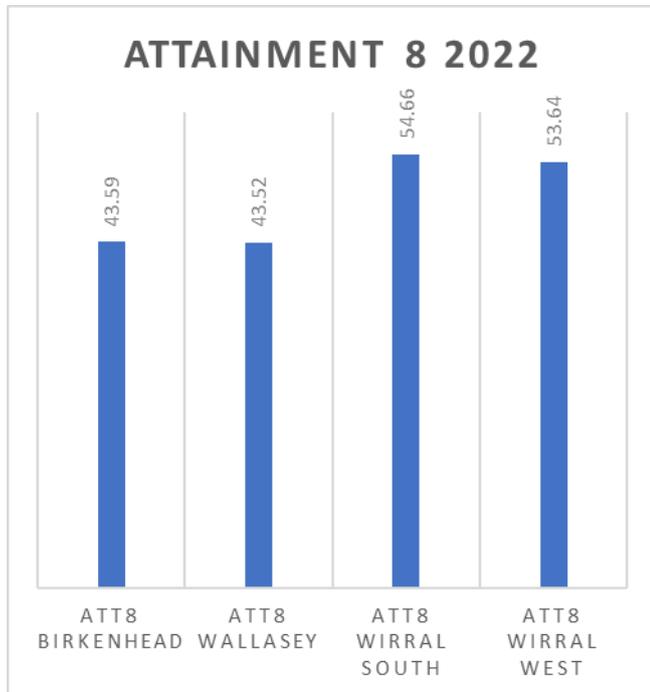
Performance of EHCP pupils decreased in 2022 in comparison to 2019 consistently across localities and performance measures. Except in Wirral West where the attainment 8 score of those with an EHCP increased 8.16 to 21.12, the progress 8 score of those with an EHCP increased 0.12 to -0.85, the English and Maths 9-4 % of those with an EHCP increased 5% to 10% and the English and Maths 9-5 % of those with an EHCP has increased 5% to 10%.

Similarly, performance of disadvantaged decreased in 2022 in comparison to 2019 consistently across localities and performance measures. Except in Wirral West where the attainment 8 score of those disadvantaged increased 1.44 to 37.79, the progress 8 score of those disadvantaged increased 0.13 to -0.30, the English and

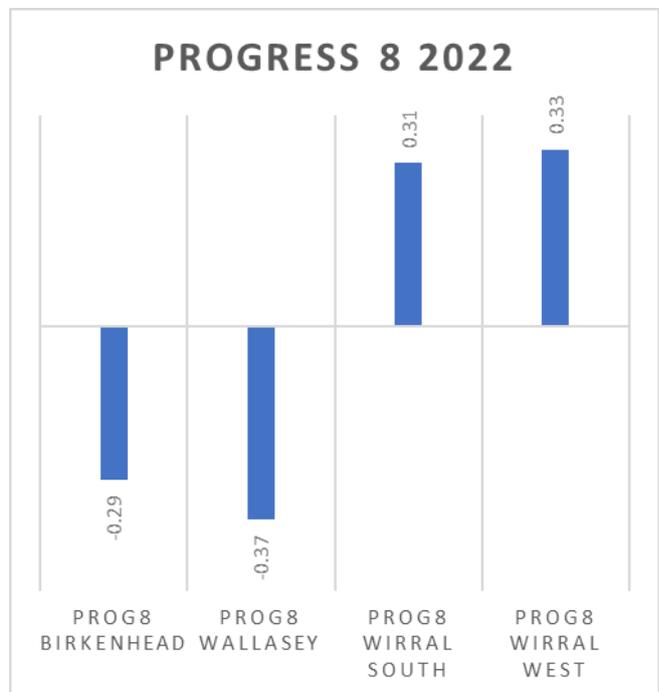
Maths 9-4 % of those disadvantaged increased 2% to 48% and the English and Maths 9-5 % of those disadvantaged has stayed the same at 25%.

## Appendices

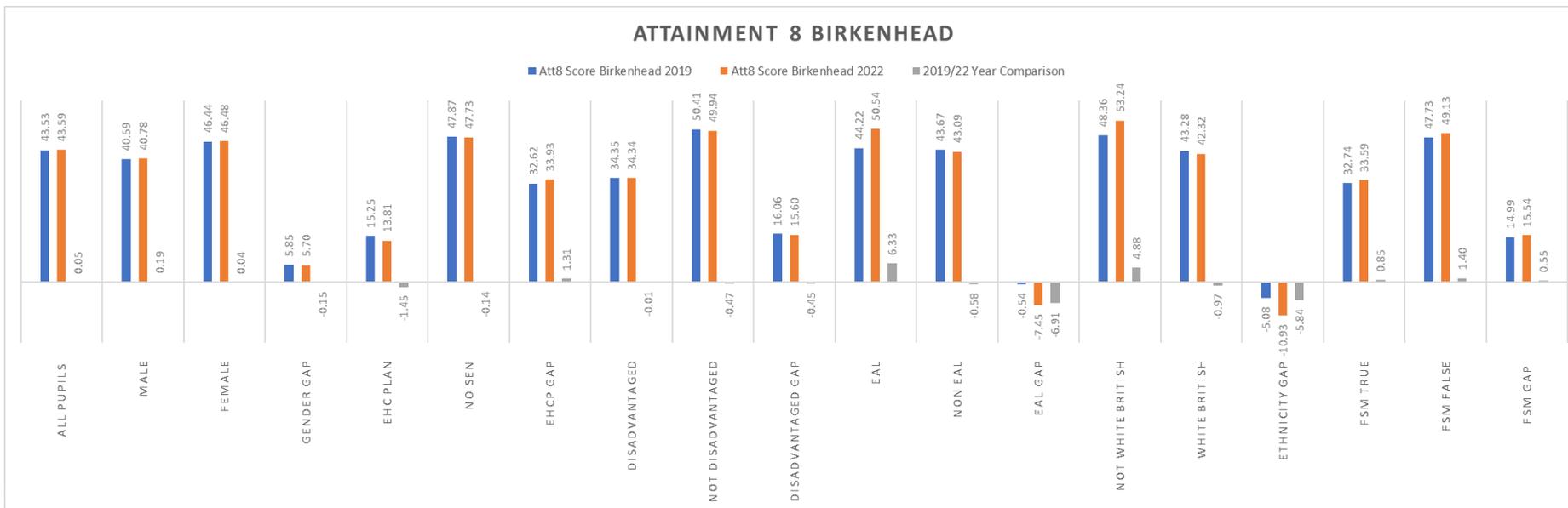
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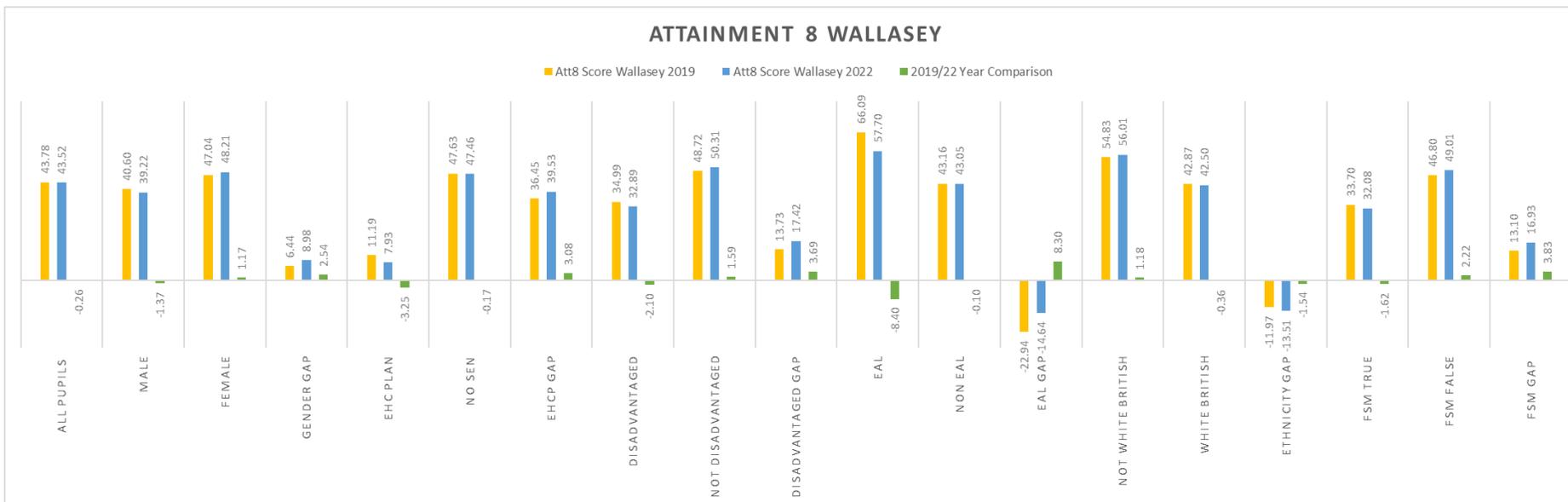
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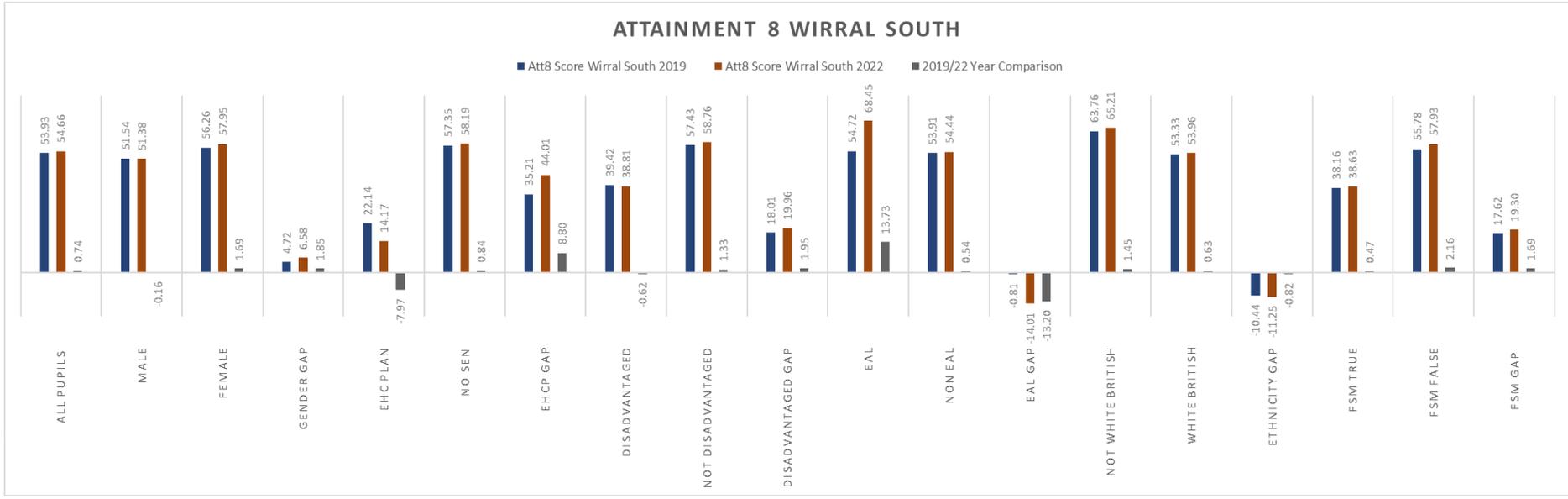
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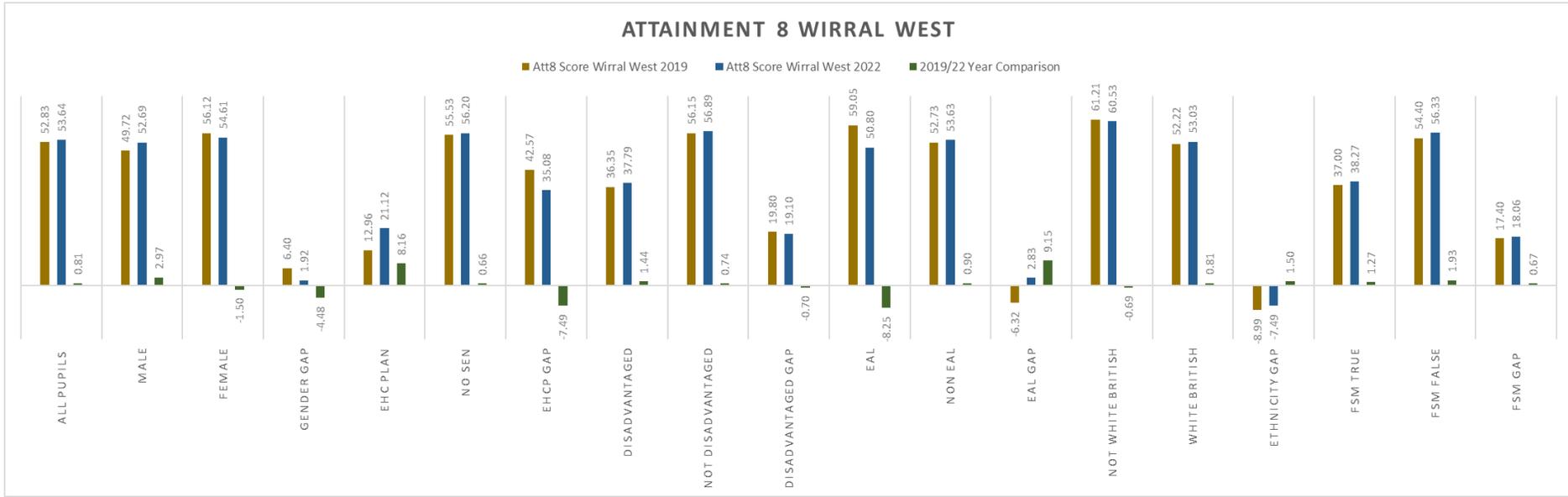
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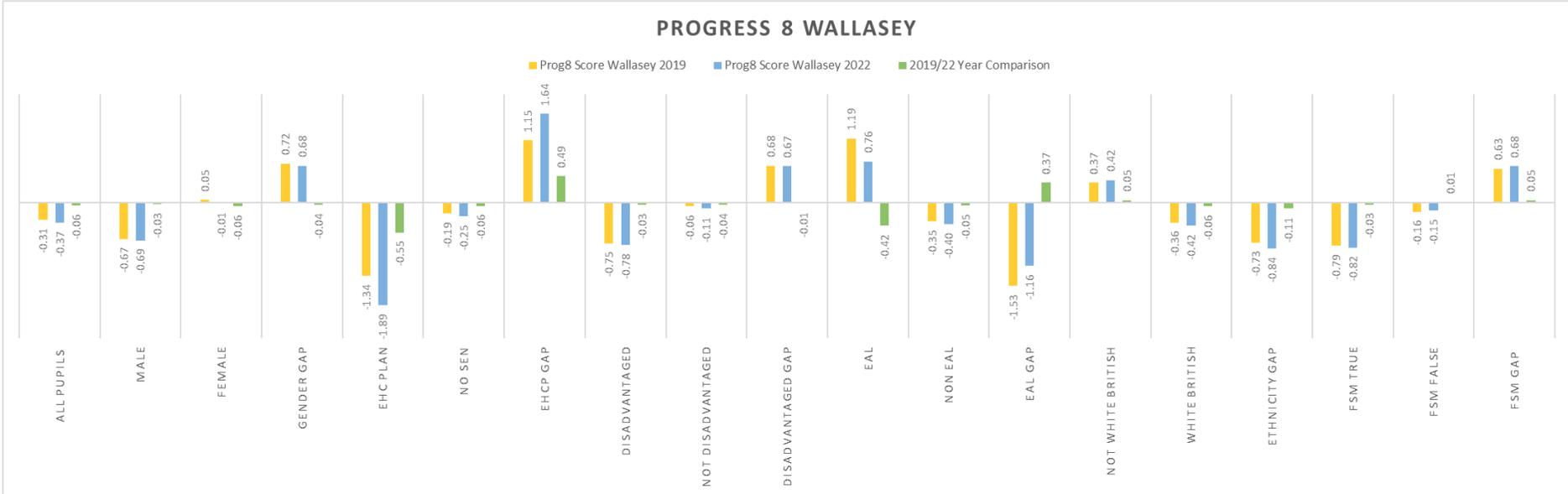
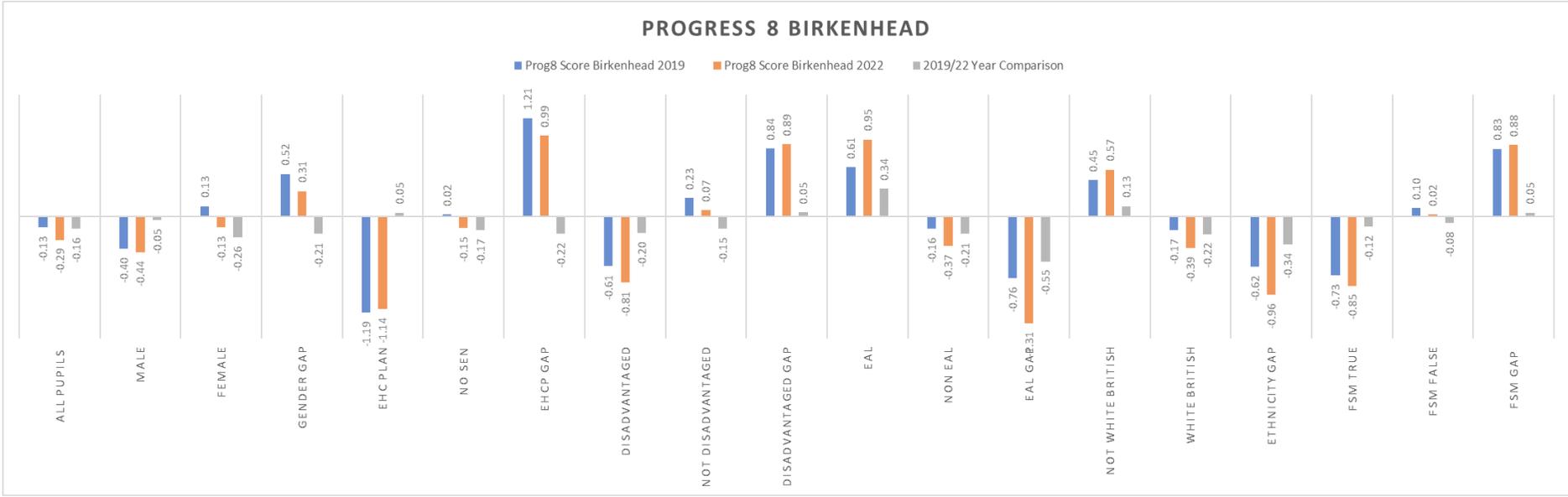
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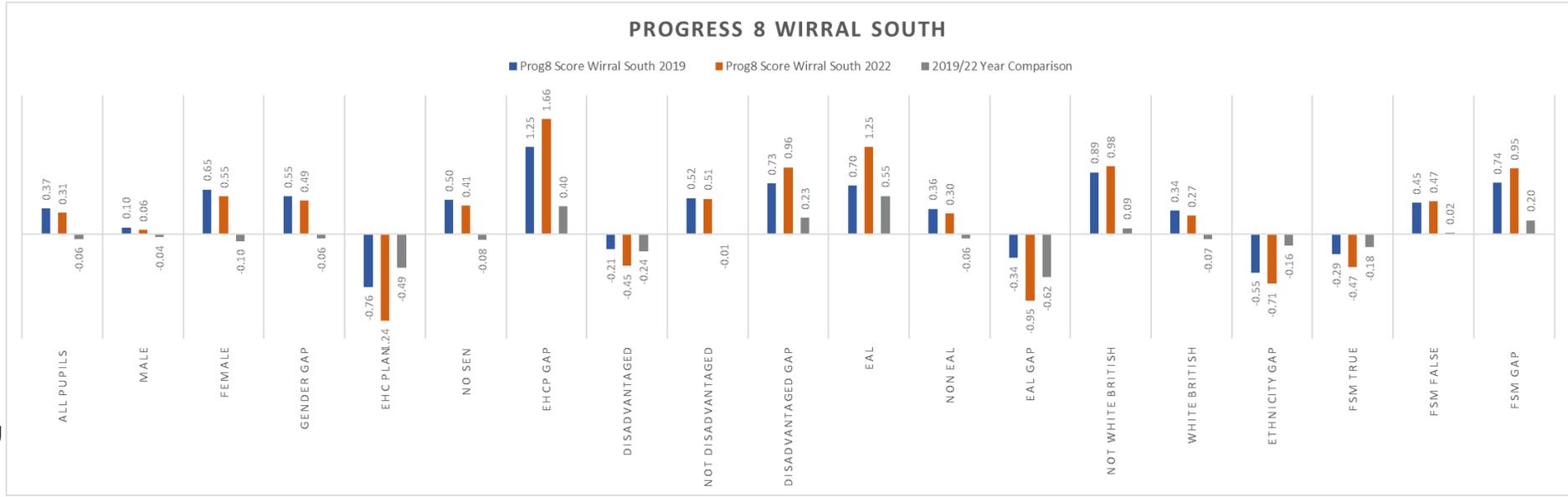
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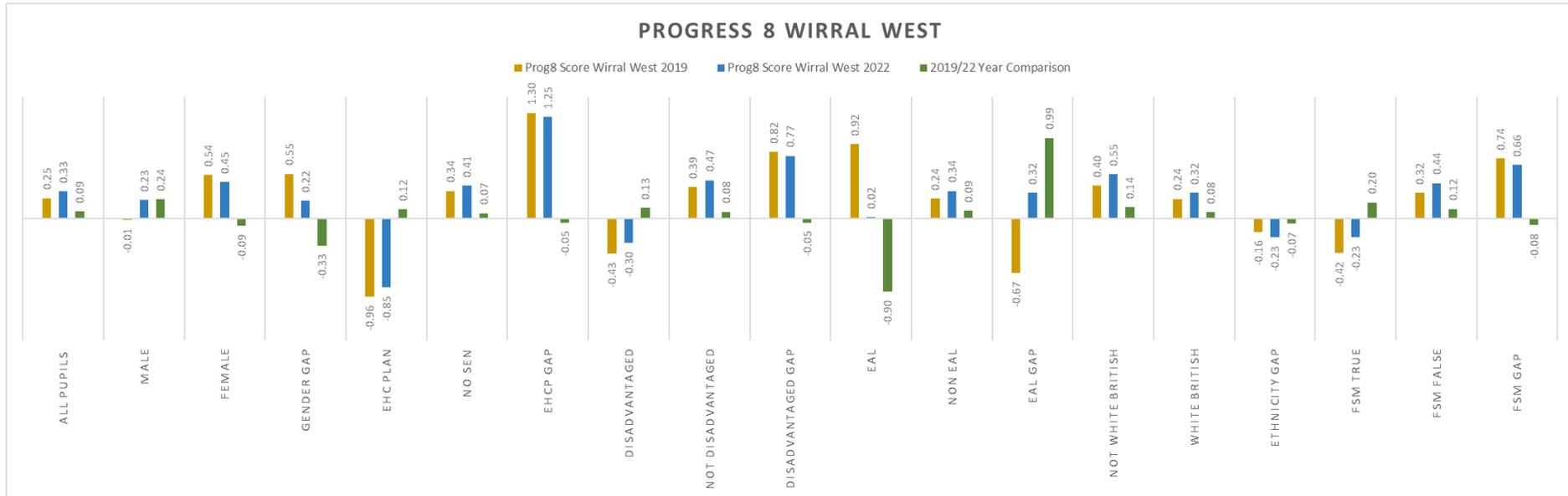
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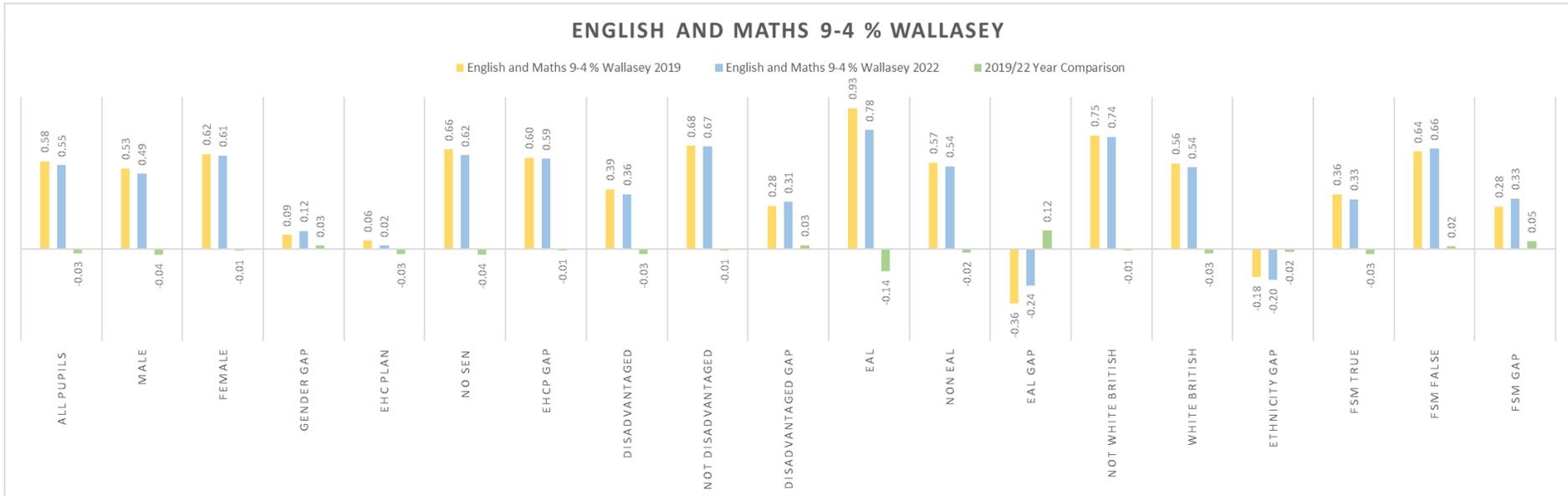
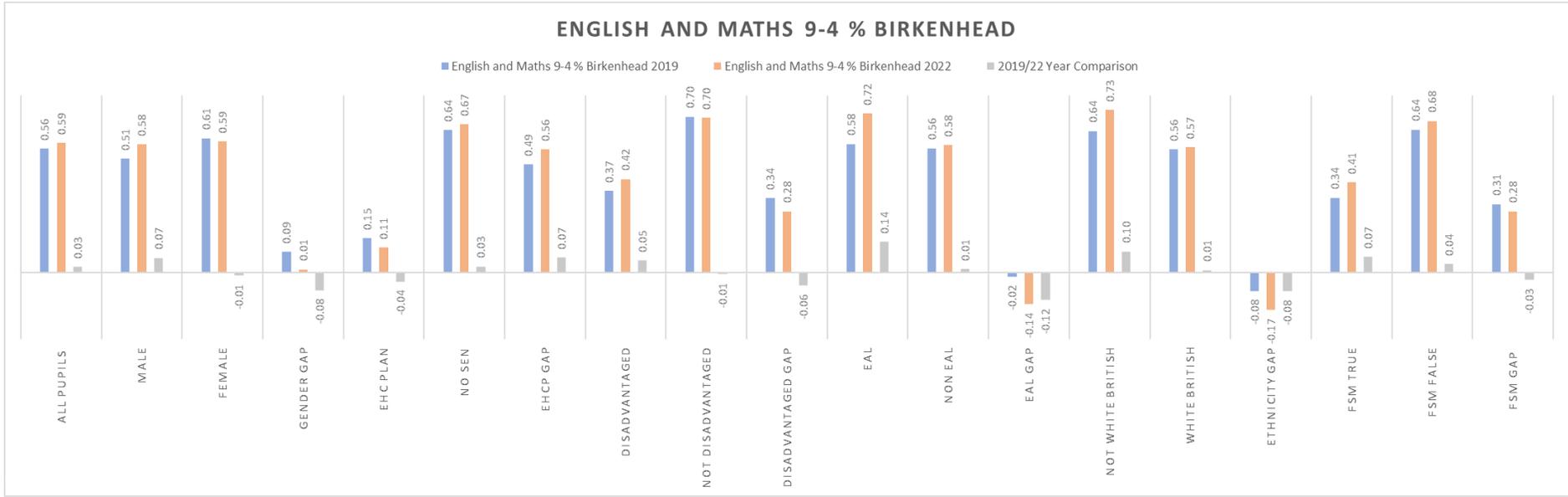


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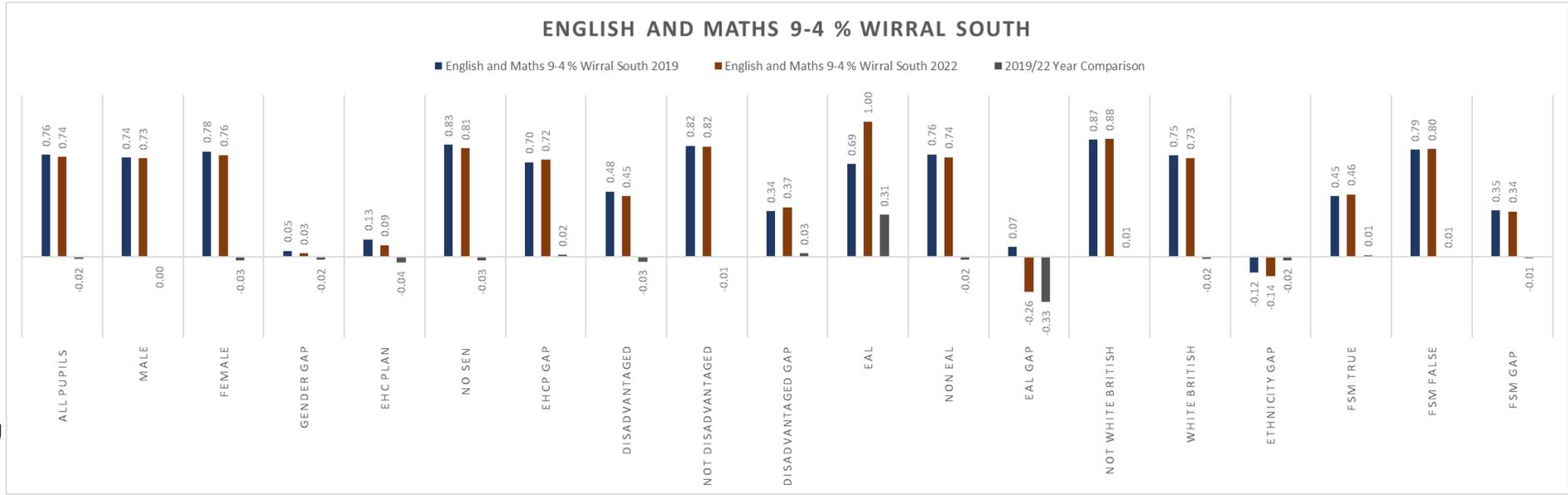


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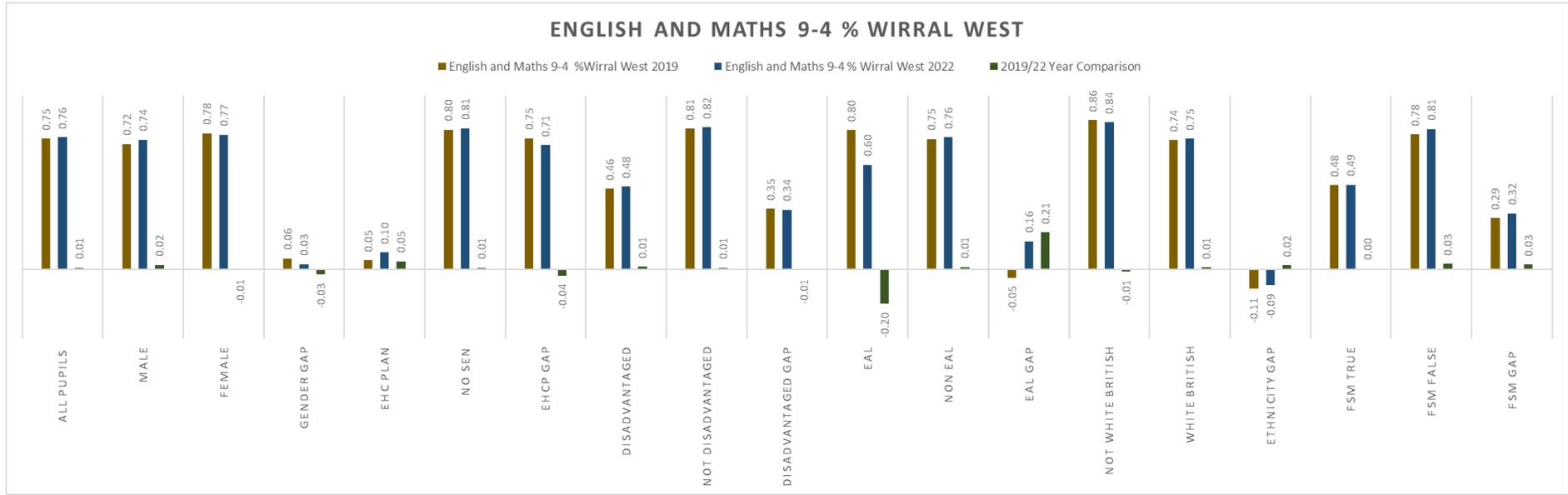




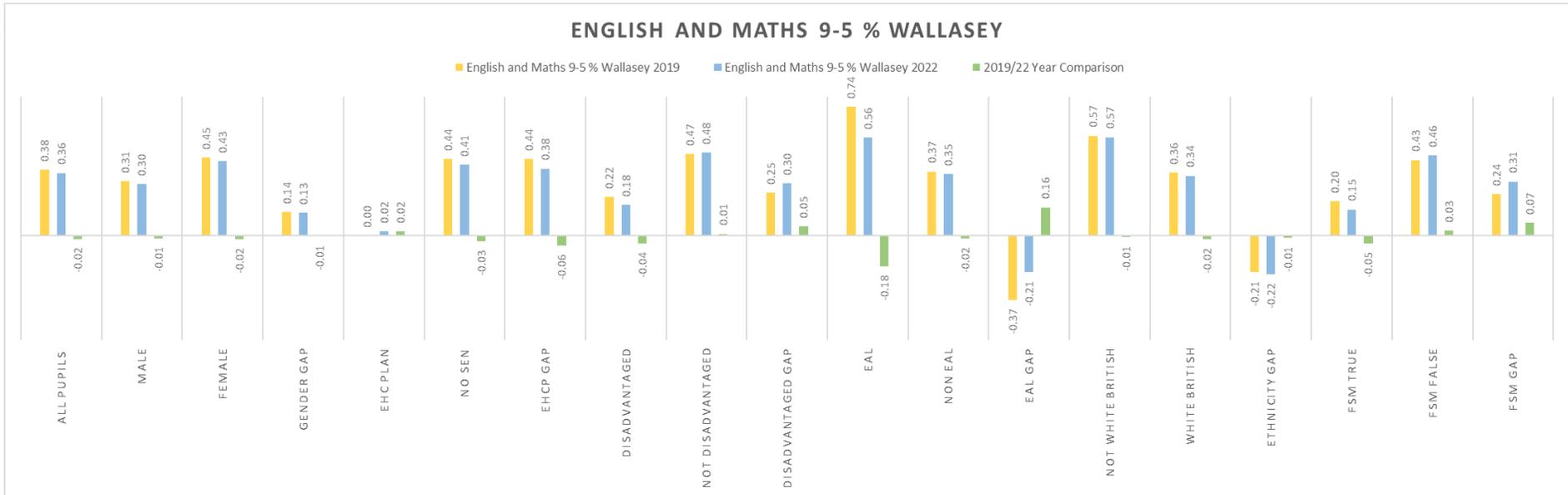
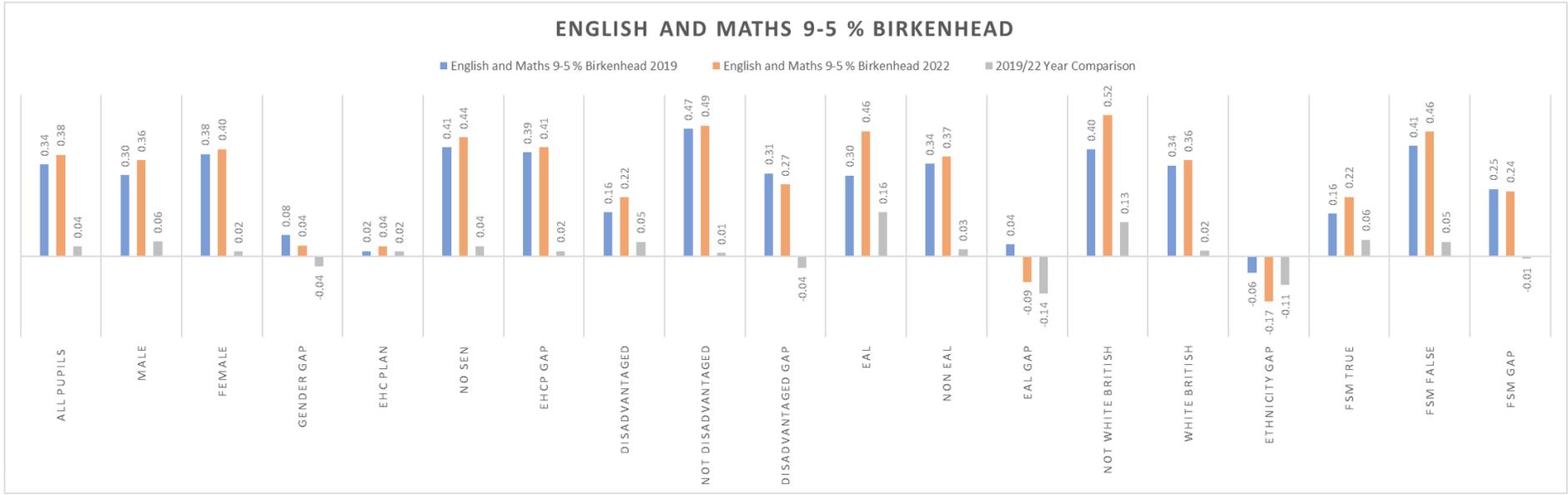
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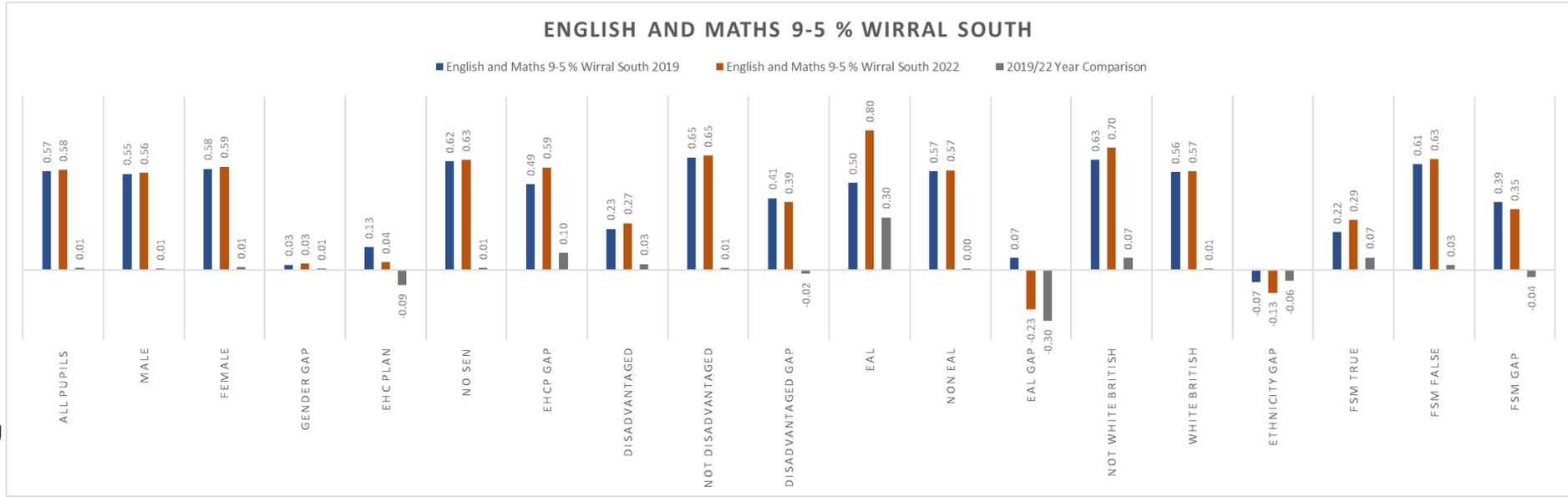
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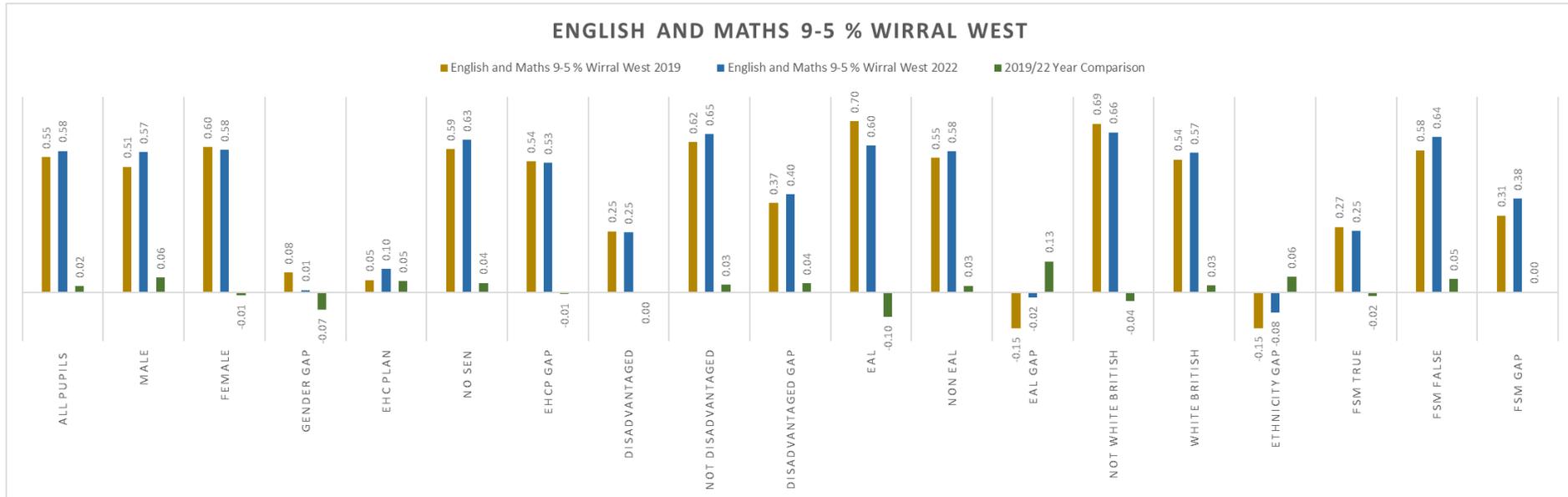
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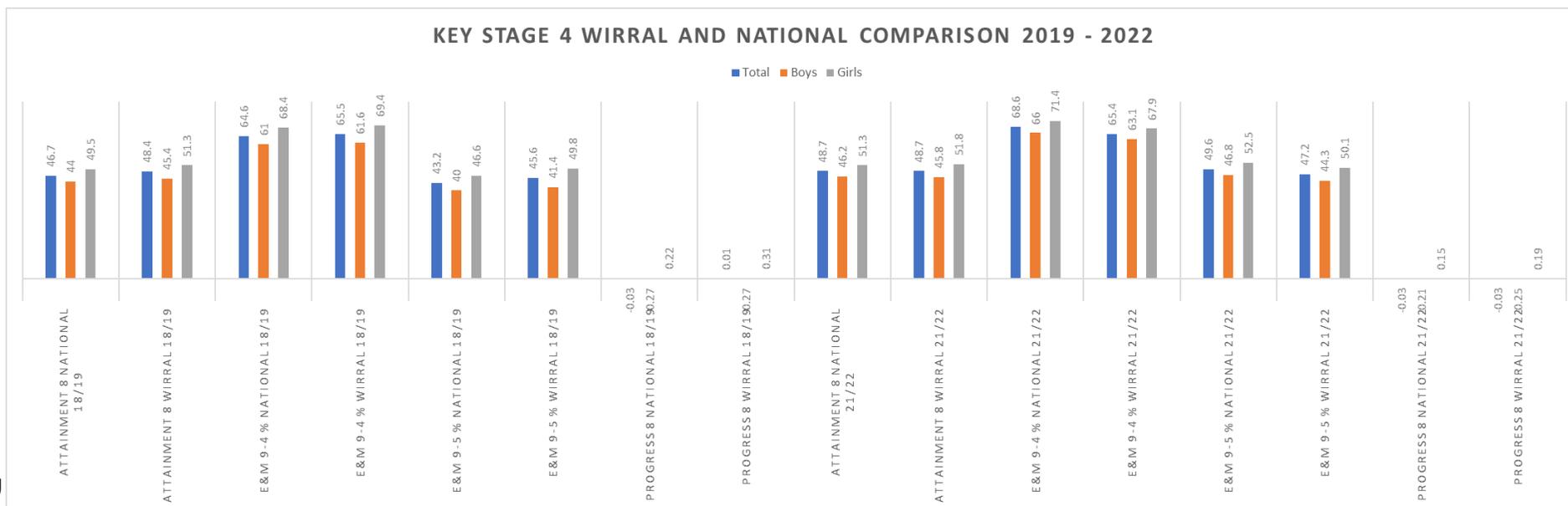
# Appendix 19



# Appendix 20



# Appendix 21



# Appendix 22

School	Attainment 8 2019	Attainment 8 2022	Progress 8 2019	Progress 8 2022	E&M 9-4 % 2019	E&M 9-4 % 2022	E&M 9-5 % 2019	E&M 9-5 % 2022
Birkenhead High School Academy	47.6	50.4	0.28	0.3	65.4	70.1	29.9	42.1
Birkenhead Park School	38.1	29.9	-0.4	-1.09	54.7	31.3	26.3	13
Co-op Academy Bebington	36.6	42.1	-0.41	-0.04	40.4	56.9	16.8	34.8
Hilbre High School	38.7	44.3	-0.02	0.14	50.8	64.8	27.4	37.7
Pensby High School	47.6	45.1	0.35	0.19	68.1	69.1	35.1	38.8
Prenton High School for Girls	46.4	48.1	0.33	0.18	71.7	68.2	44.7	43.5
Ridgeway High School	41.7	37.6	-0.08	-0.48	40.1	51.8	19	32.7
South Wirral High School	41	40.5	-0.1	-0.28	54.4	50.7	27.9	28.3
St John Plessington Catholic College	46.6	44	0.43	-0.14	57	57.3	30.9	27.3
St Mary's Catholic College	40.5	34.7	-0.33	-0.63	47.6	30.9	23.6	16
The Mosslands School	37.5	37	-0.96	-0.76	46.9	45.6	20.6	19.4
The Oldershaw Academy	34.8	34.8	-0.8	-0.84	43.8	37.7	27.3	20.8
Weatherhead High School	47.4	49.5	0.11	0.14	63.5	62.9	44.4	39
Woodchurch High School	42.3	42.7	0.02	0.06	56.6	56.8	30.7	33.4
National Non-Selective Schools	42.3	44.2	-0.14	-0.2	57.6	61.8	32.2	38.6

## Appendix 23

School	Attainment 8 2019	Attainment 8 2022	Progress 8 2019	Progress 8 2022	E&M 9-4 % 2019	E&M 9-4 % 2022	E&M 9-5 % 2019	E&M 9-5 % 2022
Calday Grange Grammar School	67.3	68.8	0.24	0.28	98.3	97.3	90.5	92.9
St Anselm's College	60.5	61	-0.05	0.16	96.2	97.9	74.6	79.3
Upton Hall School FCJ	64.2	68.3	0.78	0.91	99.3	97.4	91.1	92.7
West Kirby Grammar School	71.2	71.6	0.76	0.49	98.7	100	93.7	93.3
Wirral Grammar School for Boys	66.9	69.6	0.28	0.37	98.8	100	88.9	91.3
Wirral Grammar School for Girls	71.5	75.7	0.78	1	100	99.4	92.9	98.3
National Selective Schools	71.6	74.1	0.55	0.58	98.8	98.2	93.2	94.2

## Appendix 24

Characteristics	Att8 Score Birkenhead 2019	Att8 Score Birkenhead 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	Att8 Score Wallasey 2019	Att8 Score Wallasey 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	Att8 Score Wirral South 2019	Att8 Score Wirral South 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	Att8 Score Wirral West 2019	Att8 Score Wirral West 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison
All Pupils	43.53	43.59	0.05	43.78	43.52	-0.26	53.93	54.66	0.74	52.83	53.64	0.81
Male	40.59	40.78	0.19	40.60	39.22	-1.37	51.54	51.38	-0.16	49.72	52.69	2.97
Female	46.44	46.48	0.04	47.04	48.21	1.17	56.26	57.95	1.69	56.12	54.61	-1.50
Gender Gap	5.85	5.70	-0.15	6.44	8.98	2.54	4.72	6.58	1.85	6.40	1.92	-4.48
EHC Plan	15.25	13.81	-1.45	11.19	7.93	-3.25	22.14	14.17	-7.97	12.96	21.12	8.16
No SEN	47.87	47.73	-0.14	47.63	47.46	-0.17	57.35	58.19	0.84	55.53	56.20	0.66
EHCP Gap	32.62	33.93	1.31	36.45	39.53	3.08	35.21	44.01	8.80	42.57	35.08	-7.49
SEN Support	31.30	30.82	-0.48	32.35	31.40	-0.95	37.32	38.88	1.55	45.57	43.99	-1.57
No SEN	47.87	47.73	-0.14	47.63	47.46	-0.17	57.35	58.19	0.84	55.53	56.20	0.66
SEN Support Gap	16.57	16.91	0.34	15.29	16.07	0.78	20.03	19.31	-0.72	9.97	12.20	2.23
Disadvantaged	34.35	34.34	-0.01	34.99	32.89	-2.10	39.42	38.81	-0.62	36.35	37.79	1.44
Not Disadvantaged	50.41	49.94	-0.47	48.72	50.31	1.59	57.43	58.76	1.33	56.15	56.89	0.74
Disadvantaged Gap	16.06	15.60	-0.45	13.73	17.42	3.69	18.01	19.96	1.95	19.80	19.10	-0.70
EAL	44.22	50.54	6.33	66.09	57.70	-8.40	54.72	68.45	13.73	59.05	50.80	-8.25
Non EAL	43.67	43.09	-0.58	43.16	43.05	-0.10	53.91	54.44	0.54	52.73	53.63	0.90
EAL Gap	-0.54	-7.45	-6.91	-22.94	-14.64	8.30	-0.81	-14.01	-13.20	-6.32	2.83	9.15
Not White British	48.36	53.24	4.88	54.83	56.01	1.18	63.76	65.21	1.45	61.21	60.53	-0.69
WHITE BRITISH	43.28	42.32	-0.97	42.87	42.50	-0.36	53.33	53.96	0.63	52.22	53.03	0.81
Ethnicity Gap	-5.08	-10.93	-5.84	-11.97	-13.51	-1.54	-10.44	-11.25	-0.82	-8.99	-7.49	1.50
FSM True	32.74	33.59	0.85	33.70	32.08	-1.62	38.16	38.63	0.47	37.00	38.27	1.27
FSM False	47.73	49.13	1.40	46.80	49.01	2.22	55.78	57.93	2.16	54.40	56.33	1.93
FSM Gap	14.99	15.54	0.55	13.10	16.93	3.83	17.62	19.30	1.69	17.40	18.06	0.67

## Appendix 25

Characteristics	Prog8 Score Birkenhead 2019	Prog8 Score Birkenhead 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	Prog8 Score Wallasey 2019	Prog8 Score Wallasey 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	Prog8 Score Wirral South 2019	Prog8 Score Wirral South 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	Prog8 Score Wirral West 2019	Prog8 Score Wirral West 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison
All Pupils	-0.13	-0.29	-0.16	-0.31	-0.37	-0.06	0.37	0.31	-0.06	0.25	0.33	0.09
Male	-0.40	-0.44	-0.05	-0.67	-0.69	-0.03	0.10	0.06	-0.04	-0.01	0.23	0.24
Female	0.13	-0.13	-0.26	0.05	-0.01	-0.06	0.65	0.55	-0.10	0.54	0.45	-0.09
Gender Gap	0.52	0.31	-0.21	0.72	0.68	-0.04	0.55	0.49	-0.06	0.55	0.22	-0.33
EHC Plan	-1.19	-1.14	0.05	-1.34	-1.89	-0.55	-0.76	-1.24	-0.49	-0.96	-0.85	0.12
No SEN	0.02	-0.15	-0.17	-0.19	-0.25	-0.06	0.50	0.41	-0.08	0.34	0.41	0.07
EHCP Gap	1.21	0.99	-0.22	1.15	1.64	0.49	1.25	1.66	0.40	1.30	1.25	-0.05
SEN Support	-0.56	-0.81	-0.24	-0.64	-0.66	-0.01	-0.22	-0.11	0.11	-0.01	0.11	0.12
No SEN	0.02	-0.15	-0.17	-0.19	-0.25	-0.06	0.50	0.41	-0.08	0.34	0.41	0.07
SEN Support Gap	0.59	0.66	0.08	0.45	0.40	-0.05	0.72	0.53	-0.19	0.35	0.30	-0.05
Disadvantaged	-0.61	-0.81	-0.20	-0.75	-0.78	-0.03	-0.21	-0.45	-0.24	-0.43	-0.30	0.13
Not Disadvantaged	0.23	0.07	-0.15	-0.06	-0.11	-0.04	0.52	0.51	-0.01	0.39	0.47	0.08
Disadvantaged Gap	0.84	0.89	0.05	0.68	0.67	-0.01	0.73	0.96	0.23	0.82	0.77	-0.05
EAL	0.61	0.95	0.34	1.19	0.76	-0.42	0.70	1.25	0.55	0.92	0.02	-0.90
Non EAL	-0.16	-0.37	-0.21	-0.35	-0.40	-0.05	0.36	0.30	-0.06	0.24	0.34	0.09
EAL Gap	-0.76	-1.31	-0.55	-1.53	-1.16	0.37	-0.34	-0.95	-0.62	-0.67	0.32	0.99
Not White British	0.45	0.57	0.13	0.37	0.42	0.05	0.89	0.98	0.09	0.40	0.55	0.14
WHITE BRITISH	-0.17	-0.39	-0.22	-0.36	-0.42	-0.06	0.34	0.27	-0.07	0.24	0.32	0.08
Ethnicity Gap	-0.62	-0.96	-0.34	-0.73	-0.84	-0.11	-0.55	-0.71	-0.16	-0.16	-0.23	-0.07
FSM True	-0.73	-0.85	-0.12	-0.79	-0.82	-0.03	-0.29	-0.47	-0.18	-0.42	-0.23	0.20
FSM False	0.10	0.02	-0.08	-0.16	-0.15	0.01	0.45	0.47	0.02	0.32	0.44	0.12
FSM Gap	0.83	0.88	0.05	0.63	0.68	0.05	0.74	0.95	0.20	0.74	0.66	-0.08

## Appendix 26

Characteristics	English and Maths 9-4 % Birkenhead 2019	English and Maths 9-4 % Birkenhead 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-4 % Wallasey 2019	English and Maths 9-4 % Wallasey 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral South 2019	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral South 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral West 2019	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral West 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison
All Pupils	0.56	0.59	0.03	0.58	0.55	-0.03	0.76	0.74	-0.02	0.75	0.76	0.01
Male	0.51	0.58	0.07	0.53	0.49	-0.04	0.74	0.73	0.00	0.72	0.74	0.02
Female	0.61	0.59	-0.01	0.62	0.61	-0.01	0.78	0.76	-0.03	0.78	0.77	-0.01
Gender Gap	0.09	0.01	-0.08	0.09	0.12	0.03	0.05	0.03	-0.02	0.06	0.03	-0.03
EHC Plan	0.15	0.11	-0.04	0.06	0.02	-0.03	0.13	0.09	-0.04	0.05	0.10	0.05
No SEN	0.64	0.67	0.03	0.66	0.62	-0.04	0.83	0.81	-0.03	0.80	0.81	0.01
EHCP Gap	0.49	0.56	0.07	0.60	0.59	-0.01	0.70	0.72	0.02	0.75	0.71	-0.04
SEN Support	0.28	0.28	-0.01	0.31	0.33	0.02	0.38	0.44	0.06	0.59	0.57	-0.02
No SEN	0.64	0.67	0.03	0.66	0.62	-0.04	0.83	0.81	-0.03	0.80	0.81	0.01
SEN Support Gap	0.36	0.39	0.03	0.35	0.29	-0.06	0.46	0.37	-0.09	0.21	0.24	0.03
Disadvantaged	0.37	0.42	0.05	0.39	0.36	-0.03	0.48	0.45	-0.03	0.46	0.48	0.01
Not Disadvantaged	0.70	0.70	-0.01	0.68	0.67	-0.01	0.82	0.82	-0.01	0.81	0.82	0.01
Disadvantaged Gap	0.34	0.28	-0.06	0.28	0.31	0.03	0.34	0.37	0.03	0.35	0.34	-0.01
EAL	0.58	0.72	0.14	0.93	0.78	-0.14	0.69	1.00	0.31	0.80	0.60	-0.20
Non EAL	0.56	0.58	0.01	0.57	0.54	-0.02	0.76	0.74	-0.02	0.75	0.76	0.01
EAL Gap	-0.02	-0.14	-0.12	-0.36	-0.24	0.12	0.07	-0.26	-0.33	-0.05	0.16	0.21
Not White British	0.64	0.73	0.10	0.75	0.74	-0.01	0.87	0.88	0.01	0.86	0.84	-0.01
WHITE BRITISH	0.56	0.57	0.01	0.56	0.54	-0.03	0.75	0.73	-0.02	0.74	0.75	0.01
Ethnicity Gap	-0.08	-0.17	-0.08	-0.18	-0.20	-0.02	-0.12	-0.14	-0.02	-0.11	-0.09	0.02
FSM True	0.34	0.41	0.07	0.36	0.33	-0.03	0.45	0.46	0.01	0.48	0.49	0.00
FSM False	0.64	0.68	0.04	0.64	0.66	0.02	0.79	0.80	0.01	0.78	0.81	0.03
FSM Gap	0.31	0.28	-0.03	0.28	0.33	0.05	0.35	0.34	-0.01	0.29	0.32	0.03

## Appendix 27

Characteristics	English and Maths 9-5 % Birkenhead 2019	English and Maths 9-5 % Birkenhead 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-5 % Wallasey 2019	English and Maths 9-5 % Wallasey 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral South 2019	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral South 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral West 2019	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral West 2022	2019/22 Year Comparison
All Pupils	0.34	0.38	0.04	0.38	0.36	-0.02	0.57	0.58	0.01	0.55	0.58	0.02
Male	0.30	0.36	0.06	0.31	0.30	-0.01	0.55	0.56	0.01	0.51	0.57	0.06
Female	0.38	0.40	0.02	0.45	0.43	-0.02	0.58	0.59	0.01	0.60	0.58	-0.01
Gender Gap	0.08	0.04	-0.04	0.14	0.13	-0.01	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.08	0.01	-0.07
EHC Plan	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.13	0.04	-0.09	0.05	0.10	0.05
No SEN	0.41	0.44	0.04	0.44	0.41	-0.03	0.62	0.63	0.01	0.59	0.63	0.04
EHCP Gap	0.39	0.41	0.02	0.44	0.38	-0.06	0.49	0.59	0.10	0.54	0.53	-0.01
SEN Support	0.13	0.13	0.00	0.16	0.18	0.02	0.26	0.28	0.02	0.47	0.38	-0.09
No SEN	0.41	0.44	0.04	0.44	0.41	-0.03	0.62	0.63	0.01	0.59	0.63	0.04
SEN Support Gap	0.28	0.31	0.04	0.28	0.23	-0.05	0.36	0.35	-0.01	0.12	0.25	0.13
Disadvantaged	0.16	0.22	0.05	0.22	0.18	-0.04	0.23	0.27	0.03	0.25	0.25	0.00
Not Disadvantaged	0.47	0.49	0.01	0.47	0.48	0.01	0.65	0.65	0.01	0.62	0.65	0.03
Disadvantaged Gap	0.31	0.27	-0.04	0.25	0.30	0.05	0.41	0.39	-0.02	0.37	0.40	0.04
EAL	0.30	0.46	0.16	0.74	0.56	-0.18	0.50	0.80	0.30	0.70	0.60	-0.10
Non EAL	0.34	0.37	0.03	0.37	0.35	-0.02	0.57	0.57	0.00	0.55	0.58	0.03
EAL Gap	0.04	-0.09	-0.14	-0.37	-0.21	0.16	0.07	-0.23	-0.30	-0.15	-0.02	0.13
Not White British	0.40	0.52	0.13	0.57	0.57	-0.01	0.63	0.70	0.07	0.69	0.66	-0.04
WHITE BRITISH	0.34	0.36	0.02	0.36	0.34	-0.02	0.56	0.57	0.01	0.54	0.57	0.03
Ethnicity Gap	-0.06	-0.17	-0.11	-0.21	-0.22	-0.01	-0.07	-0.13	-0.06	-0.15	-0.08	0.06
FSM True	0.16	0.22	0.06	0.20	0.15	-0.05	0.22	0.29	0.07	0.27	0.25	-0.02
FSM False	0.41	0.46	0.05	0.43	0.46	0.03	0.61	0.63	0.03	0.58	0.64	0.05
FSM Gap	0.25	0.24	-0.01	0.24	0.31	0.07	0.39	0.35	-0.04	0.31	0.38	0.00

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Appendix 2: Common education terms

Attainment 8	Attainment 8 is a whole school performance measure that is calculated based on the grades achieved by students across 8 key subjects. The maximum score is 9, English and Maths have a double weighting.
Progress 8	Progress 8 is a measure that indicates how much a secondary school has helped pupils progress over a five-year period. This measure takes a pupil's performance in relation to their peers at primary school level, compares it with their performance at KS4 (their Attainment 8 score) establishes whether the individual has progressed. They are then grouped together to get an average for a school's overall score.
9-4 - English and Maths	The percentage of pupils that have achieved a grade 4 or above in both English and Maths
9-5 – English and Maths	The percentage of pupils that have achieved a grade 5 or above in both English and Maths
FSM	Free School Meal is a statutory benefit available to school- aged children from families who receive other qualifying benefits
PP	Pupil premium is funding available to schools for pupils who have been receipt of free school meals in the last 6 years.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
SEND Support	Identified with SEND needs but not in receipt of an EHCP
CLA	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
EAL	English as an additional language

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## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025: PROGRESS REPORT</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

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

The Strategy sets out the Council’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; and
- 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.

The Strategy will be implemented 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 is not a Key Decision. This report affects all Wards.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to endorse the progress made to date on implementing Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

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

- 1.1 To ensure that elected members are briefed and have oversight on the progress towards implementation of the Social Care Workforce Strategy. A commitment was made in January for members to continue to monitor the progress and activity undertaken in this area as it is a key risk area for the council.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Do nothing: It is important that there is appropriate and effective monitoring of strategies and plans to provide assurance that progress is being made.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2025 was approved by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in January 2022. Following approval of the Strategy, a robust governance framework was put in place. This involved the establishment of a Social Care Workforce Strategy Board, chaired by the Assistant Director for Children and Families and consisting of key representatives from the Practice and Performance Improvement Teams, Human Resources and Social Care. Several sub-groups were also established to lead on the specific priorities within the Strategy.

### **3.3 Priority 1: 'Growing our own' through recruitment and development:**

- 3.5 The following key achievements have been made to date:

- A calendar of recruitment events has been outlined to promote Wirral as a great place to work. Colleagues from the Council attended a recruitment fair at Anfield, Liverpool in August 2022.
- A contract was put in place with three recruitment agencies to assist with identifying suitable candidates for hard to fill posts. To date, the agencies have supported with recruitment of 7 social workers.
- A 'package on a page' has been developed to outline all of the benefits of working in Wirral including, training and development, employee benefits and other enticing opportunities.
- A new exit interview process has been launched to understand the reasons why people are leaving and to provide an opportunity to put mitigating actions in place or address concerns.
- Three social workers have successfully completed year one of their Social Work Degree Apprenticeship. A second cohort will launch in January 2023 and 4 suitable candidates have been successful in joining the programme.
- All of the students who have been part of the Step Up to Social Work Programme as part of cohort 7 were successful in application to become Newly Qualified Social Workers in Wirral. A bid to the Department for Education for cohort 8 has been successful, with Wirral continuing to be the host organisation on behalf of nine other authorities.
- The Department for Education has agreed to provide £250,000 to fund an innovation programme, led by Capacity Community Interest Company, which will, if it proceeds, see the development of a non-for-profit recruitment agency. So far,

as part of the programme, a feasibility study has been undertaken and engagement has taken place with Councils across the North west. Agreement on the final proposed model is expected early 2023.

**3.6 Priority 2: Support Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention:**

3.7 The sub-group that has been set up to deal with this priority has met on a regular basis and below summarises the progress made to date:

- A coaching and mentoring programme has been developed and will be launched in January 2023. There is already a corporate database of coaches who can be accessed by all employees. A bespoke Children's Services database is being established;
- Regular bi-monthly audits are in place to identify good quality practice and areas for improvement. A new Learning and Celebration event was held in November 2022 as an opportunity to share and celebrate the excellent work of social workers.
- Shadowing opportunities have been advertised and a shadowing pilot will commence in 2023 with 5 hosts and 5 staff shadowing. Work to support the development of the Social Work Academy has taken place, including the writing of materials in relation to Continuing Professional Development ("CPD"), progression and wellbeing and engagement. Filming of several social work colleagues has been undertaken.

**3.8 Priority 3: Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects 'high support high challenge':**

3.9 The work under this priority sits with the CPD Subgroup which meets on a regular basis. Below summarises the progress made to date:

- A senior manager audit has been undertaken using 360-degree feedback tool to identify strengths and areas for development amongst senior managers.
- All Heads of Service in Children's Services have been enrolled on a Leadership Programme which explores positive leadership techniques and teamwork.
- A new Social Work Leadership Pathways Programme has been made available to all Team Managers. The Pathways programme is managed/offered by Frontline (a charity who support the development of excellent social work practice and leadership) on behalf of DfE.
- Regular Team Manager forums empower managers to understand their role and responsibilities in relation to improving practice.

**3.10 Priority 4: Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families:**

3.11 This priority has focussed on two major change programmes:

- system-wide family approach; and
- systemic practice

- 3.12 **System-wide family approach:** A new locality approach to working has been designed and a first phase implemented in social care services on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. The locality model has been informed through engagement sessions with practitioners and managers. The approach is being regularly reviewed by operational leads, heads of service and the Assistant Director for Children and Families.
- 3.13 **Systemic Practice:** The Wirral safeguarding Children Partnership has introduced systemic practice as the next iteration of the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) model for working with children, young people and families.
- 3.14 A multi-agency steering group has been established to oversee and direct development and implementation of the model and 4-day training sessions for professionals has been developed and delivery began in October 2022 and sessions were available through to the end of 2022. Feedback about the training has been very positive. The model will be officially launched early in 2023.
- 3.15 **Priority 5: Communication and change management:**
- 3.16 In order to address this priority, teams have been taking steps to improve the way in which they communicate, and progress includes:
- A communications survey and policy has been developed.
  - A change management approach, including a step-by-step change management delivery plan, has been adopted for the implementation of our Wirral System-Wide Family approach. This change management approach will be utilised for any future strategic change within children's services;
  - Completion of the 2022 Social Work Organisational Resilience Diagnostic (SWORD) survey has taken place and the findings have been analysed so that clear themes could be addressed.
- 3.17 **Underpinning theme: Wellbeing**
- 3.18 Progress made so far on this theme includes:
- A wellbeing calendar has been launched which includes wellbeing activities and thematic days for staff to be involved in activities. These activities have been a mix of virtual and in-person events and sessions and have included offering social workers free hot drinks at Liberty Bell, charity cake sales and gardening competitions;
  - A #Bethedifference revive has taken place with changes made to the annual Be the difference awards so that nominations capture good practice and recognition around different award categories. This received 71 responses across the directorate which was the highest ever received.
- 3.21 **Sector Challenges**
- 3.22 Despite the positive work which has taken place to deliver the Strategy, increasing the number of permanent social workers in Wirral remains a challenge and, like many other authorities, there is an increasing number of vacancies. The data overview at appendix A of this report provides an overview of the number of social workers who have started at Wirral compared with the number of leavers as well as the number of agency workers in post.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 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 Council 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 Council to adhere to its legal obligations.

## **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; and
- 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 Council provides clear strategic direction for the prioritisation of resource and activity. The implementation of the strategy will lead to 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. Councils 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 There is a commitment as part of the ongoing delivery of the Strategy to engage and consult with different stakeholders on new proposals and initiatives connected with

each theme. This includes frontline professionals, senior managers and other departments.

## **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.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Overview of social care workforce data

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

National Review of Social Care  
Social Care Workforce Strategy 2019-2021  
SWORD survey 2021  
SWORD survey 2022

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with paragraph A of its Terms of Reference: 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.

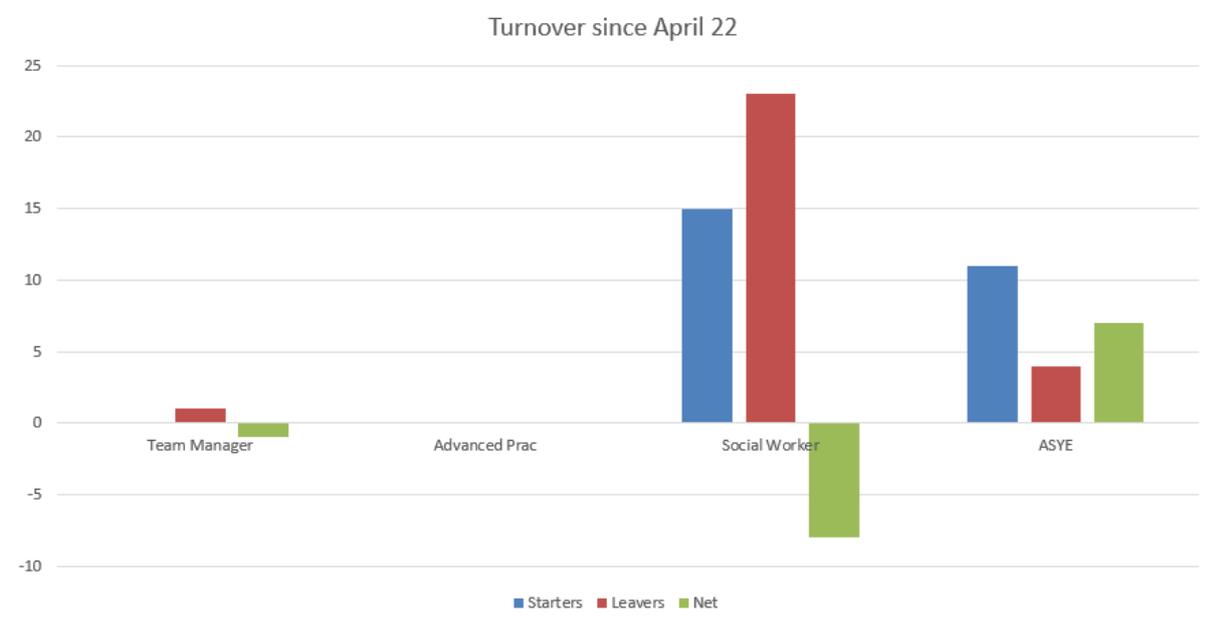
**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Children, Young People and Education Committee</b>	<b>January 2022</b>

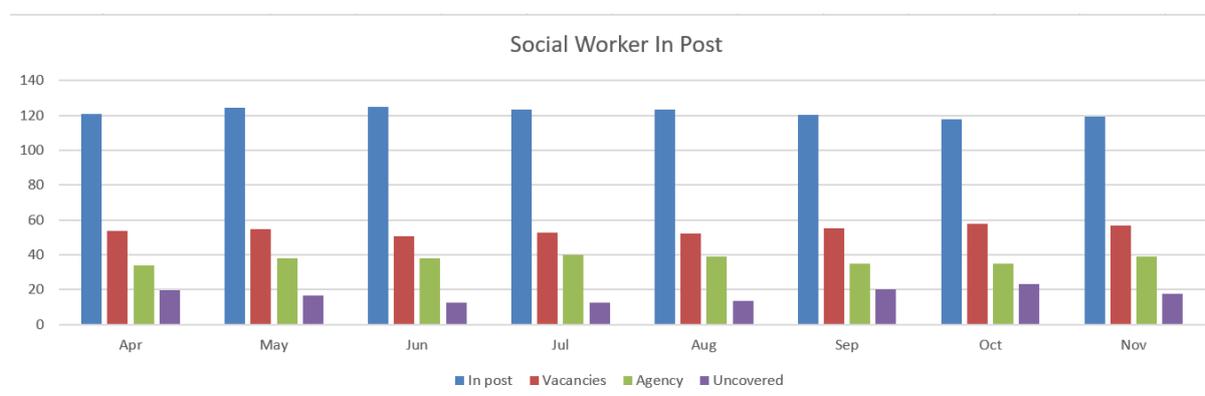
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## Appendix A Overview of social care workforce data

### Staff turnover (April – November 2022)



### Social workers in post (April – November 2022)



### Number of agency staff in post (April – November 2022)

Agency		FY 2021/22																			
Distinct Employees		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Children, Family and Education	Children and Families	36	32	30	30	47	50	55	61	47	50	53	51	55	52	52	50	50	50	49	54
	Early Help and Prevention	5	5	4	7	8	7	7	6	5	4	5	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Education	7	6	6	10	11	10	10	10	12	11	11	14	16	13	12	12	12	12	11	11
	Modernisation and Support	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	3	3

### Sickness and days lost throughout the directorate (April – November 2022)

Sickness - FTE days per FTE														
Lost Days per FTE														
		FY 2021/22 Total												
Row Labels	Service Name	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Current Total	Projected for April			
Children, Family and Education	Children and Families	16.0	1.4	0.9	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.2	9.6	14.4		
	Early Help and Prevention	10.8	0.91	0.91	0.99	0.67	0.99	1.13	1.28	1.21	8.1	N/A		
	Education	5.0	0.22	0.22	0.12	0.13	0.30	0.24	0.30	0.53	2.1	N/A		
	Modernisation and Support	13.1	1.07	1.01	1.49	0.92	1.12	1.02	0.97	0.95	8.5	N/A		



## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 24 JANUARY 2023

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION WORK PROGRAMME</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE</b>

### 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.

Following the adoption of a revised Constitution by Council on 25 May 2022, the Terms of Reference for Committees were updated so that the agenda of any Committee or Sub-Committee shall only include those items of business that require a decision, relate to budget or performance monitoring or which are necessary to discharge their overview and scrutiny function. The Committee is therefore asked to consider whether any items for future consideration on its work programme need to be reviewed to comply with the revised Constitution. It is proposed that issues on the existing work programme that are for information purposes only can be considered via other means, such as briefing notes or workshops.

### RECOMMENDATION

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

- (1) note and comment on the proposed Children, Young People and Education Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year.
- (2) review its items for future consideration on the work programme in light of the revised Constitution.

## **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;
  - looked after children;
  - mental health services;
  - safeguarding;
  - special educational needs and disability (SEND);
  - youth offending services;
  - youth services; and
  - social and education transport

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

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

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake 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 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct community wealth implications.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Victoria Simpson  
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## APPENDICES

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

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Constitution  
Forward Plan  
The Council's transformation programme

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

**KEY DECISION ITEMS**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Approximate timescale</b>	<b>Lead Departmental Officer</b>
Childrens Residential Transformation Programme Update Report	March 2023	

**ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Approximate timescale</b>	<b>Lead Departmental Officer</b>
Schools Capital Programme – Update Report	March 23	James Backhouse/ Janette Royle
Review of Post 16 provision	March 23	James Backhouse/ Paul Smith
Social Care Workforce Strategy update	January 23	Hannah Myers/ Kerry Mehta
Children’s Residential Transformation Programme Update Report	March 2023	Anne Marie Carney
CLA and Care leavers strategy progress update	March 2023	Hannah Myers
Inspection update	March 2023	Simone White
Child and adolescent mental health	March 2023	Carol Roche/ Darren Birks
Early Years quality assurance and sufficiency	March 2023	James Backhouse
SEND Transformation Programme Update	March 23	Elizabeth Hartley
Annual Overview of Ofsted inspections	June 23	James Backhouse
Breaking the Cycle update reports x 2	TBC	Elizabeth Hartley
Update on Government White Paper ‘opportunities for all’	TBC	James Backhouse

## STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Performance and Financial Monitoring Report	Quarterly June September December March	Tricia Thomas
Budget Update	Quarterly June September November February/March	Nicholas Ajaegbu
Annual Review of Ofsted inspections in Wirral Schools	Every June	James Backhouse
Reappointment of School Appeals Panel Members	Every June	
Children's Committee Work Programme Update	Each Meeting	Committee Team
Summary of Standards	September 22	James Backhouse
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
<b>Working Groups/ Sub Committees</b>				
Corporate Parenting Panel	committee	Ongoing	Hannah Myers	
Working Group: Food and Activities during school holidays	Working group	Report back in December	Mark Camborne	
Workshop – Statutory Duties (School Budget)	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
Child Poverty Strategy	Workshop	October 22	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 & Designated School's Grant	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
PFI Options ( Kingsway) – Chair and Spokes	Presentation	TBC	Hannah Myers	
Budget Monitoring Panel	Monthly meeting	TBC	Nicholas Ajaegby	
LADO	Workshop/ presentation	TBC	Kerry Mehta	
Capital Programme – to be integrated within budget workshop				
<b>Task and Finish Reviews</b>				
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<b>Spotlight Sessions and Workshops</b>				
County Lines Action Update	Workshop	2021/22	Simone White/Tony Kirk	

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## **Children, Young People and Education Committee – Terms of Reference**

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

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

- (a) exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council;
- (b) the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education;
- (c) working with all schools (including academies) in relation to raising standards of attainment and developing opportunities;
- (d) leading for the Council and its partners in the discharge the Council's functions as Corporate Parent for its children in care and care leavers;
- (e) any other functions comprised in partnership arrangements with other bodies connected with the delivery of services for children, young people and families;
- (f) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions;
- (g) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:
  - child protection;
  - children's centres;
  - education, schools and settings;
  - looked after children;
  - mental health services;
  - safeguarding;
  - special educational needs and disability (SEND);
  - youth offending services;
  - youth services; and
  - social and education transport

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