

Meeting:	Extraordinary Council – Ofsted Report into Children’s Services
Date:	Monday 17 th October 2016
Proposed by:	Cllr. Jeff Green
Seconded by:	Cllr. Wendy Clements

Notice of Motion:

Council is appalled at the findings contained within the inspection report into Children’s Services in Wirral from Ofsted, the opening line of which reads: “there are widespread and serious failures in the services provided to children who need help and protection in Wirral.” The independent report lays bare in the starkest possible terms the catastrophic failure of the Labour Administration to provide any sort of leadership to the service and their inability to perform the most important duty they have – to keep the Borough’s children safe.

Council notes that under the previous Conservative / Liberal Democrat Administration, safeguarding and looked after children’s services were rated good by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

Council is angered that the Labour Administration was warned multiple times that its plan of scrutinising itself by appointing Labour Chairmanships of Scrutiny Committees was doomed to failure. Not only did the Administration ignore opposition members they also did not implement the recommendation from the LGA Peer review in 2015 which stated “the role of scrutiny may be enhanced in the longer term by offering opposition members a leadership role on the Policy & Performance Committees.”

Council is disappointed that so far a culture of spin and news management has pervaded the Labour ranks:

- leaked letters
- a long line of Council ‘spokesmen’ rolled out to face the public anger whilst the Labour Administration hide in their bunker
- a special council requisitioned before the Ofsted report was made public
- complete silence from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Council is gravely concerned that the current Labour Administration have abdicated all responsibility for these failings and we have absolutely no confidence that the Leader of the Council and his Cabinet, who have allowed the services to deteriorate to such an unacceptable level, are the right people to provide the leadership required to improve Wirral Council’s Children’s Services to the level our residents expect and children deserve.

Council therefore requests:

- a. A root and branch review of current governance arrangements for overview and scrutiny to enhance its independence from the Administration.
- b. The resignation of the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Children and

Family Services, the Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Pledge Champion for 'Vulnerable children reach their full potential'.

c. That the Strategic Director, Families and Wellbeing and other Senior Officers responsible, consider their positions and honestly assess whether they are the right people to lead and oversee the desperate requirement to improve this service.

d. Quarterly Special Council meetings to review the progress of the action plan developed under the stewardship of the Department for Education.

Proposer:

Seconder:

