

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 17THOCTOBER 2016

OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT

1. Council accepts OFSTED's report on services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and the 19 recommendations for improvement and agrees that there needs to be radical change across the service, the council and partnership. The details will be proposed to an Improvement Board comprising key stakeholders including an independent chair, an advisor appointed by the Department for Education and members from the main political groups on the Council.
2. Council acknowledges the difficult circumstances Wirral's children's services operate under - the growing demand for care from struggling families, the complexity of the cases being managed, and the cruel impact Government policy and funding decisions continue to have on families and residents in Wirral.
3. Keeping our children safe is our highest priority and there is no excuse for failing to deliver the highest quality services to vulnerable young people in Wirral. The key priority now is to develop an effective improvement plan with detailed actions and outcomes which address all of OFSTED's recommendations.
4. Council notes, as the OFSTED report acknowledged, many of the changes suggested have already started, but they need to deliver not just improvement but outstanding services for vulnerable children.
5. Council welcomes the quick and clear response of the Labour administration in organising an improvement board with representation from across the political groups, members of the Wirral Partnership, independent advisors, and the engagement of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to demonstrate the priority this issue has for the whole authority.
6. Council also welcomes the allocation of £2m to enable immediate changes in children's services to happen at pace, including recruitment of a new Head of Service and other key posts, improvements in training, improved accountability and, ultimately, improved performance and outcomes for young people.
7. Council supports the social workers, officers, voluntary sector, foster families, carers and partners who are committed to improving the services our vulnerable young people receive and to the action plans and programmes of improvement that are already underway.
8. Council agrees to receive progress reports on the improvement plan relating to OFSTED's recommendations as well as appropriate reports being submitted to Cabinet, scrutiny committees and other relevant bodies.

Proposed: Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded: Councillor Tony Smith