

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - NOTICE OF MOTION (1)

<i>for Council on</i>	17 October 2016 (Extraordinary Meeting at 4pm)
<i>submitted on</i>	6 October 2016
<i>to:</i> <i>copied to:</i>	Surjit Tour Andrew Mossop, Patrick Sebastian
<i>Proposed by:</i>	Cllr Phil Gilchrist
<i>Seconded by:</i>	Cllr Alan Brighthouse

OFSTED'S LEGITIMATE CONCERNS

In the light of the Inspection findings, this Council will do its utmost to ensure that the 19 recommendations relating to its role are fully implemented in a timely and purposeful manner.

Council will progress the recommendations relating to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. It must have the capacity, input from partners, funding, accurate data, reporting arrangements and independence to carry out its work.

Council welcomes the clear process being followed as set out in the OFSTED Handbook 'Monitoring and re-inspection of local authority children's services judged inadequate' (published in August 2016). The Council must pay full regard to this statutory process and heed the advice and oversight of the DfE's independent advisor.

Since Members of the Children Sub Committee received a presentation on the issues on 22 September, a number of Members are properly apprised of the issues in hand. However, Council is concerned that the 'Spotlight Session' originally arranged for 11 October 2016 was postponed. The key failings could have been outlined in a similar frank manner prior to Council to provide a more informed debate from the start of the improvement journey.

Council, however, needs to reflect upon the adequacy of its oversight regarding the changes in management, structures and organisation that took place between the inspection of 2011 and the recent inspection. Cases across the country have brought about increased pressures on front line staff. A firmer OFSTED process was anticipated. This alone cannot explain the difference between the assessments.

Council needs to be reminded what OFSTED found in 2011 ...

'overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is good'

'The capacity for improvement is good'

'Succession planning in children's services to support continual improvement is very good'.

'The quality of leadership provided by the interim director is excellent, and the internal appointment has ensured a seamless transition'

' Managerial oversight of these cases is consistently well evidenced and ensures that effective and timely intervention is taking place'

'There is an outstanding level of commitment to improving services for children and young people in Wirral shared by the leader, Lead Member, Interim Chief Executive and the interim Director of Children's Services'

'Senior managers in children's social care offer outstanding support and share a clear vision with front line managers who in turn consider they are professionally valued and well engaged'

Members must, therefore, question whether the chopping and changing of scrutiny arrangements, limiting the choice of performance data presented, and the focus on the narrow areas in the 2020 Plan contributed to the latest findings.

It is necessary to be clear on who knew what and when, and establish if concerns were or were not acted upon in a timely manner.

A clear mechanism for reporting to and informing Members of the progress is necessary.

Council requests, in the interests of children we seek to protect and serve, the following steps:

- a. regular progress reports on the work in hand to address the failings identified;
- b. the Council agenda must provide an opportunity for regular statements by the Cabinet Member responsible;
- c. arrangements are made for a specific question time so that the adequacy of the steps can be tested.

<i>Proposer:</i>	Cllr Phil Gilchrist 		<i>Seconder:</i>	Cllr Alan Brighthouse 
------------------	--	--	------------------	---