



**COUNCILLOR
BERNIE MOONEY**

CABINET

17 July 2017

WIRRAL SCHOOLS STRATEGY

Councillor Bernie Mooney, said:

“We want every child to attend a good school, getting a good education which helps them live positive, happy lives where they achieve their aspirations. This strategy is about every school in Wirral working together, alongside the Council and other agencies, to support each other and improve.

“Wirral already performs very well – 9 in 10 of our children already attend a good school. Our ambition is for this number to be 100% by 2020. To get there we will deliver improvements in our early years, school and college education over the coming years to enable Wirral pupils to achieve their full potential.

“I am delighted to say our schools, partners and every related agency are fully behind this strategy. Everyone with an interest in improving local education has worked together to create this collective plan. I am incredibly proud of the work which has already been done, and I am excited at the potential for even better performance this strategy brings.”

REPORT SUMMARY

In line with the national agenda Local Authority School Improvement officers have been working with school leaders to develop a more autonomous and self-improving school system, enabling schools, irrespective of their status, to lead their own improvement. The conversion of schools to academies has resulted in increased autonomy for these schools who are answerable to the Regional Schools Commissioner’s office and the Education Funding Agency. The majority of Wirral secondary schools (76%) are academies. Currently only 7% of Wirral primary schools are academies.

The significant reduction of £3.2 million in the Education Services Grant received by the local authority to undertake statutory duties around school improvement has meant that schools cannot rely on the local authority to continue with these functions in the way they had been previously. Whilst there is now some reduced provision within the Schools Budget and a new grant from September the majority of national school improvement funding available can only be accessed through collaborative bids by Teaching Schools, local authorities and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs).

Achieving well at school is fundamental to improving the quality of life for all of our children and young people in Wirral. The strategy aspires for all of education settings to be rated as 'good or outstanding' by 2020, and we must deliver improvements in our early years, school and college education over the coming years to enable Wirral pupils to be the best they can be. The strategy aims to make sure there is consistent quality and levels of attainment across the borough, continuing our record of exceeding national averages for quality, achievement and attainment for all students.

The vision of the Schools Strategy is:

"For all Wirral children and young people to achieve their potential, contribute positively to society and lead fulfilling and successful lives"

To achieve this vision, it is essential for the whole school community including pupils, parents, carers and teachers and the local community to work together to help our children and young people to be the best they can be.

The strategy covers three broad priorities:-

1. All children and young people in Wirral attend schools which are good or outstanding
2. All children and young people are supported to achieve their full potential, with a particular focus on our most vulnerable pupils
3. Children and young people attend the school which best meets their needs

The Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision sets out a partnership vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Plan are underpinned through the delivery of a set of key strategies.

This report provides Cabinet with the Wirral Schools Strategy; a key strategic document which articulates the ambition for children and young people to be the best they can be.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is therefore a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is requested to approve the Wirral Schools Strategy which is appended to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Wirral Schools strategy has been developed to support the delivery of the Wirral Plan pledges, in particular Children are Ready for School; Young People are Ready for Work and Adulthood and Vulnerable Children Reach their Full Potential. The strategy has been developed with partners and stakeholders to ensure that there has been extensive engagement in the development of the strategy and its three priority areas.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In July 2015, the Wirral Partnership agreed the Wirral Plan, a set of 20 pledges to be achieved by 2020, which focused on ensuring every child gets a good start in life, protecting the most vulnerable and making sure that vulnerable children reach their full potential, driving economic growth by young people leaving education equipped with the knowledge, skills and resilience to be ready for work and Wirral residents living healthier lives. Although two of the strategies contained key performance indicators related to children and young people achieving well in school and continuing education a strategy around schools was developed from September 2016. Young people were invited to contribute their views about what enabled them to learn and achieve well as well as the barriers to learning. Headteachers and school leaders were also given the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the strategy. In addition research was undertaken to determine the key factors that parents considered when choosing a school.
- 3.2 The strategy has been developed through a partnership steering group chaired by Sue Talbot, Lead School Commissioner, as well as representatives from Wirral Council School Improvement officers, National Leaders in Education, parents, governors, Wirral Headteachers who sit on the Locality Boards and the Senior manager for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The steering group has sought engagement with key stakeholders such as Headteachers, parents and children and young people. The strategy includes a set of partnership actions to be delivered over the course of the three-year strategy. The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis with regular performance reporting taking place through appropriate governance arrangements.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However the removal of the Education Services Grants (ESG) means that from April 2018 the funding available to offset salary costs for a number of Council employees who are responsible for facilitating the delivery of the strategy and ensuring the Council is able to meet its current statutory duties will be reduced by a further £940,000.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. As projects to deliver the strategy are developed the legal implications will be identified as part of the project plan.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 The Wirral Schools strategy will be co-ordinated in partnership by existing staff resource. However the direct ESG funding of this staff resource ceases in March 2018.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Corporate Risk Register will be refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan developments to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The Wirral School strategy has been developed through a partnership steering group and has been subject to wider consultation with partners and other stakeholders through the development of the strategy. The Wirral Schools strategy has been developed through a partnership steering group and has been subject to wider consultation with partners and other stakeholders through the development of the strategy.

A stakeholder event took place in March 2017 and the feedback from the event has been used to inform the final draft of the strategy.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The potential impact has been reviewed with regard to equality and the impact assessment can be found via link:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017-1>

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Wirral Schools Strategy (to be included following final updates)

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Not applicable	