

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 21 June 2023

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Powell-Wilde (Chair)	
	Councillors	P Basnett T Laing P Jobson (for S Bennett) L Luxon-Kewley K Hodson C Povall	V Wilson C Cooke J Grier C Carubia M Jackson (Independent Person)

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Bennett with Councillor Paul Jobson substituting.

3 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interests and to state the nature of the interest.

A number of councillors raised that they were school governors or foster parents. The Head of Legal Services advised that there was a standard dispensation for such interests and that they were not required to be noted.

The Chair declared a personal interest as a foster carer.

4 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023 be approved as a correct record.

5 PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The Chair informed the committee that two public questions had been received.

Lorraine Krimou asked a question relating to the award of higher funding rates to nurseries that have staff with a qualified teacher status which they felt created a two tier system of provision to nurseries that all offered the same level of services.

The Chair responded that the Government informed councils in mid-December that the Teacher Pay and Pensions Grant (TPPG) would be included in the early years funding block. The guidance supplied from the government encouraged local authorities to use the rolled-in funding to continue to support some of the costs for which the original grants had been introduced. A consultation of early years providers had been undertaken to determine how they thought the TPPG should be delivered. With all various methodology applied, schools would see a reduction in their funding for the TPPG element compared with the previous year. The quality supplement's follow the same line as flexibility supplements with different eligibility criteria applied. The Local Authority proposed that the TPPG funding be delivered through the quality 2 supplement and the base rate. This was agreed through the School Forum Committee and was ratified through full council.

Sarah Spoor asked a question regarding the continued closure of the music and sensory rooms at Wallasey Youth Club due to Covid restriction. She wanted to know when the space could be reopened to children and young people.

The Chair responded that Wirral's youth offer for Wallasey was delivered in collaboration with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services which provides the accommodation for the Youth Hub. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, services were now deemed safe to offer again. The Chair confirmed that the rooms could be re-opened with immediate effect.

Sarah Spoor asked a supplementary question regarding the provision of internet access at the Youth Hub.

The Chair stated that a written response would be sent to her within 10 days.

The Chair confirmed that no statements or petitions had been received.

The Chair confirmed that no questions from Members had been received.

6 **NEW CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING MODEL**

The Joint Commissioning Lead introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education. The report set out the new local model to be jointly commissioned from April 2024. The joint commission between Children, Families and Education Services, Public Health and Wirral Place Integrated Care Board would transform available support and provide a more effective and co-ordinated approach to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Members asked for further details on the organisation Capacity. The Joint Commissioning Lead stated that they were an organisation that worked with public services that are looking to transform services, offering information on research around other alliances in the country, providing needs analysis, organising focus groups and producing update reports.

Member sought assurances that new model wouldn't adversely effect Children and Young People already within the system or put a further strain on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The Joint Commissioning Lead assured Members that any Children and Young People currently receiving intervention would not be effected and that the new model should help to ease the pressure on CAMHS by filtering out Children and Young People that may need help but do not require the services of CAMHS.

Members queried whether existing services would be informed of any changes, whether the new model would allow for different approaches to mental health issues and when Members could expect to see results from the new model. The Joint Commissioning Lead noted that the Future Mind Group kept all stakeholders informed, that the new model would respect different approaches to mental health provision and would allow people to help themselves before seeking further help. She noted that the Service had identified a number Key Performance Indicators and were clear on the data that needed to be collected and measured.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

7 **SCHOOL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023-2024**

The Assistant Director of Education introduced the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place. The report noted that the Department for Education allocated grant funding each year to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings and grounds. All local authorities must ensure that they have a sound Capital strategy for education services, ensuring that facilities are sufficient, safe and offer the best teaching environment for pupils of all abilities.

The report gave details of the planned Capital work for Maintained Schools over the following 12 months and gave details of proposed spend of two capital grants: (i) School Condition Allocation and (ii) High Needs Provision Capital Allocation.

Members asked for information on the boiler replacements in schools and how environmentally clean the replacements were likely to be. The Assistant Director of Education noted that where possible the most carbon neutral options were being chosen and that he would arrange for further information to be provided to Members in writing from the Assets Team.

In response to a query on the Higher Needs Provision The Assistant Director of Education explained that the Council received its' allocation directly from Department for Education (DfE). He noted that officers have been in contact with the DfE to ask about the availability of further funding.

Members queried whether schools with a budget surplus could divert that surplus towards school improvements. The Assistant Director of Education noted that there was a distinction between Revenue and Capital budgets and that for the schools that Wirral Borough Council was directly responsible for, there was a rigorous process to where Capital allocations are made to ensure needs are met. However, where schools wish to make their own budget decisions, there would be the option to discuss this with them and to potentially make a Revenue to Capital transfer. He noted that ultimately the Capital funding should fulfil Wirral's school needs as per the guidance from the DfE.

Members asked about the process for school repairs were an academy school to be given back to the Council. The Assistant Director of Education noted that there is no option for an academy school to be returned to a Local Authority. The Director of Children, Young People and Education noted that if an academy ceased to trade, the building would fall back to the Local Authority and at that point a decision would need to be made on the building and its use.

Members asked for a breakdown of the Basic Need allocation of £381,049 pounds, and queried why there was no allocation for 2021-22 or 2022-23. The Assistant Director of Education noted that Basic Need was linked to rising pupil numbers, for example if there is a population increase in a particular area. Wirral had not had an allocation for the past 2 years as there had been a decline in pupil numbers over that period. The Assistant Director of Education offered to provide further details on Basic Need in writing to Members.

Resolved – That:

- 1. The Identified projects be included in the Schools Capital Programme funded by the Department for Educations.**
- 2. Asset Management be requested to progress all project designs, tender documentation, and initiate project implementation. Noting that all projects over £100,000 will be required to present tender details and prices via Officer Decision Notices.**

8 2022/23 BUDDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER FOUR (THE PERIOD TO 31 MAR 2023) OUTTURN

The Director of Children, Young People and Education introduced her report which set out a summary of the year-end revenue and capital position for the 2022/23 financial year for the Children, Families and Education Committee. The report provided Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2022-23 saving programme and a summary of reserves to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

Members queried an area that had been delayed around approved savings. The Director of Children, Young People and Education noted that the delay had been centred around the move to buy a property to create a unit for Children and Young People with learning difficulties and mental health difficulties. The owner of the property had unfortunately died during the process of purchasing it, which meant the property had to go through probate. This process had now been completed and the purchase was moving at pace towards completion,

Members sought further information on community wealth building and whether there were other example like Juno Community Interest Company (CIC). The Director of Children, Young People and Education noted that Juno CIC was the first of its model in the whole country and stated that it was groundbreaking.

In response to a query on the level of need for provision residential care for children and young people, the Director of Children, Young People and Education noted that Wirral has just under 70 children in residential care at any one time, as well as some in supported living arrangements. She noted that work was continuing to ensure that the right homes were available to meet the needs of those children that needed them.

Resolved – That:

- 1. The year-end revenue position of £3.471m adverse variance reported for 2022/23 be noted;**

2. **The progress on delivery of the 2022-23 savings programme be noted;**
3. **The level of reserves at the end of 2022/23 be noted; and**
4. **The capital position at the end of 2022/23 be noted.**

9 **2023/24 BUDGET AND BUDGET MONITORING PROCESSES**

The Director of Children, Young People and Education introduced her report which set out how the 2023/24 budget would be monitored through the Committee system, which would facilitate the Policy and Services Committees (the Committees) to take ownership of their specific budgets and present appropriate challenge and scrutiny of Officers on the management and performance of those budgets.

Resolved – That

1. **The process for in-year monitoring of the 2023/2024 budget be noted; and**
2. **A Budget Monitoring Panel be established comprising of the Committee Chair and Spokespersons, with sessions led by the relevant Director/Assistant Director**

10 **CHILDRENS' SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER FOUR**

The Interim Head of Operations for Children's Services introduced the report of the Director of Children, Young People and Education. The report provided the latest performance information for Children's Services. The design and content of the report was developed following discussions with the Chair of the Children, Young People & Education Committee and party spokes at a Performance Monitoring workshop back in March 2021.

Members asked whether the information on free school meals could be broken down between primary and secondary schools. The Interim Head of Operations for Children's Services stated she did not have the information to hand but would be happy to send Members the information in writing.

Members requested further information on care leavers aged 19-21 and the number that are not in education or employment. The Director of Children, Young People and Education noted that all care leavers are monitored and offered to provide Members further data regarding the work undertaken to support them. She noted that in her experience the care leavers that she had witnessed in employment had been a huge asset to their place of work and wished to encourage other committees to present employment opportunities to care leavers.

In response to a query on support offered to SEND children that were being electively home educated, the Assistant Director of Education noted that where a child has an EHCP, and is being electively home schooled, conversations were being held through SEND assessments regarding what support can be offered.

Members noted there had been a rise in suspensions and permanent exclusions from schools, with figures higher than the national average and queried why that was and what work was being undertaken. The Assistant Director of Education noted that for the first three quarters of the year, the figures were below the national average but there had been a spike in quarter 4 and he acknowledged that work needed to be done to work out why that had happened.

Members queried the Interim Head of Operations for Children's Services confidence in the accuracy of the data on the numbers of electively home schooled children. The Interim Head of Operations for Children's Services noted that when a parent takes a child out of the school system, they have to notify the school so the service will be fully aware of all children being electively home schooled. She noted that data for social care was updated on a daily basis and that SEND and Education data was currently updated weekly if not daily.

Resolved – That the content of the report be noted.

11 **OFSTED SUMMARY REPORT 2022-2023**

The Assistant Director of Education introduced the report of the Director of Children, Young People and Education. The report 2023 gave an outline of all inspections that had taken place across for the academic year 2022-2023 and that had been published at the point of report writing. The attached summary document (appendix 1) gave a summary of the school inspected, the date, overall outcome and areas for development.

Resolved – That the contents of the report be noted.

12 **ALL AGE DISABILITY SERVICE REVIEW**

The Assistant Director of All Age Independence introduced the report of the Director of Children, Young People and Education. The report presented the findings and recommendations for greater alignment of All Age Disability Service. Noting that the scoping, initiation, planning and engagement phase was complete.

Members noted that only 3.1% of people with a learning difficulty in Wirral were employed compared to 5.1% nationally and queried what was being

done to improve this. The Assistant Director of All Age Independence noted that work was being done to provide a coordinated approach to this issue with a co-produced strategic framework to identify how to improve employment for people with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The Director of Children, Young People and Education stated the importance of the subject matter of the report and that working collaboratively with the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee was important to the success of improving access to employment for people with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The Chair asked that further work on the All Age Disability Service be added to the Work Programme.

Resolved – That the priorities and indicative timeframe, as listed in Appendix 4 of the report be noted.

13 **APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2023 / 2024**

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance. The purpose of the report was to enable the Committee to review the continuing need for various panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties, and to appoint members and named deputies to serve on those (including the statutory committees and panels) that are to be retained in 2023/2024.

The Head of Legal Services noted an error regarding political balance for the Corporate Parenting Panel within the report. The report stated that the 5 members of the Panel were to be made up of 2 Labour Members, 2 Conservative Members and 1 Green Party Member. She noted that the correct balance should in fact be 2 Labour Members, 1 Conservative Member, 1 Green Party Member and 1 Liberal Democrat Member.

Members noted that the Young People's Advisory Group had not met in some time and asked if further meetings could be arranged.

The Assistant Director of Early Help and Prevention noted that since the lockdowns during the Covid-19 Pandemic the group had not met and agreed that it was time to re-establish those meetings.

Resolved – That:

- 1. The Monitoring Officer be authorised as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Statutory and Advisory Committees listed in the report, with the agreement that the Corporate Parenting Panel**

be made up of 2 Labour Members, 1 Conservative Member, 1 Green Party Member and 1 Liberal Democrat Member, and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members;

- 2. The current constitution and membership of the School Appeals Panel be noted.**

14 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which reminded members that the Children, Young People and Housing Committee was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme was to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which were the remit of the Committee.

The Chair noted that she would like a workshop on the All Age Disability Service to be added to the work programme.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.