

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 18 October 2023

Present: Councillor S Powell-Wilde (Chair)

Councillors P Basnett V Wilson
S Bennett Graham Davies (for
T Laing C Povall)
K Stuart (for L C Cooke
Luxon-Kewley) J Grier
K Hodson A Brame (for C
Carubia)

In attendance: M Jackson (Independent Person)

44 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting as well as those watching the webcast and reminded them that a copy of the webcast would be retained on the Council's website for two years.

45 APOLOGIES

Councillor Louise Luxon-Kewley sent her apologies. Councillor Kaitlin Stuart substituted.

Councillor Cherry Povall sent her apologies.
Councillor Graham Davies substituted.

Councillor Chris Carubia sent his apologies.
Councillor Allan Brame substituted.

46 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interests in connections with any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Councillor Paula Basnett and the Chair both declared personal interests as foster carers.

47 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

48 **PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

The Chair noted that no public questions, statements, or petitions had been received.

49 **AN OVERVIEW OF YOUTH WORK IN WIRRAL**

The Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention introduced the report of the Director of Children, Family and Education. The report provided the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an overview of the current Youth Offer on Wirral for children and young people. It also outlined key documents that have influenced Youth Work as a profession supporting the Youth Offer on Wirral.

The report noted that local authorities had a statutory duty to provide youth services. Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 states that local authorities must 'secure as far as necessary practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational for young people' and make sure young people have a say in the local offer. The Local Authority met its statutory responsibility through a localised youth offer which included provision delivered by the Local Authority Youth Services and commissioned third sector partners, at both universal and targeted levels.

Members asked if the majority of users of the HIVE, Wirral Youth Zone were from the Birkenhead area and whether officers foresaw a likely drop in attendance due to the regeneration work taking place in Birkenhead. The Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention stated that the majority of attendees at the HIVE were from the local area and that officers did not expect a drop in usage.

A discussion took place on effective outreach, the use of the HIVE, Wirral Youth Zone, in Birkenhead and its finances as well as the Zillo website for young people and the Youth Provision in areas outside of Birkenhead.

Members queried how Wirral would be affected by the new guidance on statutory provision. Officers noted that Wirral was in a good position, already offering services that the guidance suggested such as an online presence. It was the intention to bring a further report to the committee on the new guidance.

Resolved – That

- 1. The youth services provided for children and young people be reviewed and scrutinised.**
- 2. The receipt of a further report on how the Youth Offer meets the requirements of the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, issued September 2023 be agreed.**

50 **FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT 1ST APRIL 2022-31ST MARCH 2023**

The Head of Permanence Services introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education. The report provided an overview of the Fostering Annual Report for the period of 1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023 for consideration and scrutiny.

The Fostering Annual Report provided an overview of the fostering service in terms of key performance to date, analysis of current practice, key issues and risks and plans for continuous improvement and progress over the following 12 months.

The monitoring of the Fostering Service was required under the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Regulations 2011 and the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011. The Local Authority provided foster placements for children looked after whom the Local Authority acted as Corporate Parent for.

The purpose of the report was for the committee to consider the extent as to which Wirral Council had fulfilled its responsibilities as a Fostering Service providing placements for Children Looked After by the Council.

Members discussed foster care on Wirral noting that it was a vital service and that more carers were always needed. They stated that better financial aid offered to foster carers would help to increase the number of people volunteering.

The Head of Permanence Services noted that the service was open to new ideas on how best to promote fostering. The Chair stated that it was important for Members of the committee to attend events related to fostering to help promote the service.

Resolved – That the information within the report and the Annual Fostering Report 2022-23 in Appendix One be noted.

51 **ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 1ST APRIL 2022-1ST APRIL 2023**

The Head of Permanence Services introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education. The report provided an overview of the Adoption Annual Report for the period of 31st March 2022 - 1st April 2023 for consideration and scrutiny. The Adoption Annual Report provided an overview of

the fostering service in terms of key performance to date, analysis of current practice, key issues and risks and plans for continuous improvement and progress over the next 12 months.

The report provided the Committee with assurance that the Council had fulfilled its responsibilities to children who would benefit from being adopted.

Members queried whether foster carers went one to adopt and officers confirmed that this did happen on a regular basis. Members noted that the processing time for the adoption procedure has reduced.

Resolved – That the information within the report and the Adoption Report 2022-23 in Appendix One be noted.

52 **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.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.