



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 July 2024

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| REPORT TITLE: | APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2024/2025 |
| REPORT OF: | CHAIR OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE |

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to enable the Children, Young People and Education 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 2024/2025.

The Council Plan for 2023-2027 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan:

- A people focused regeneration.
- Safe, resilient and engaged communities.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- (1) authorise the Monitoring Officer 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 and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.
- (2) note the current constitution and membership of the School Appeals Panel.
- (3) Give consideration to the proposal to appoint a cross party group of Members to conduct a policy development review in accordance with the approach outlined at appendix 2 of the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Committee is required to appoint the membership of various panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties, which fall under its remit at the start of each Municipal Year.
- 1.2 The key drivers for refreshing policy development work at Committees is the move to a Whole Council Election Scheme in May 2023 and the new four-year Council Plan agreed by Council on 4th December 2023. The Council Plan provides an opportunity to establish a new way of strategically 'working together' across the organisation to deliver the Council Plan vision '*working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities*' and the associated Council Plan enabling and delivery themes:

Enabling Theme:

- Working together to create a more efficient, effective and accessible Council.

Delivery Themes:

- Working together to improve early help for children and families.
- Working together to promote independence and healthier lives.
- Working together to deliver people-focused regeneration.
- Working together to protect our environment.
- Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other options considered include appointing a different number of members to the statutory and advisory bodies.

Policy Development

- 2.2 Potential options which the Committee could investigate, and potential consequences, include:
- 2.2.1 Not conducting policy development work. However, policy development work is clearly stated in The Council's Constitution and not conducting this type of work can be viewed by the sector as being indicative of wider governance and service failure issues (it is also considered good practice). Given the new Council Plan has now been approved, Members now have a clear strategic framework to conduct effective policy development work. It is important as it engenders transparency and enables the Council to be accountable to residents. It can help the Council achieve best value; support further improvement and best practice; and enable locally adopted, enforceable recommendations and policies which deliver better outcomes for the wider community.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Statutory Committees and Panels

3.1 The following statutory committees and panels, all of which have full delegated authority, were retained during 2023/2024.

(i). School Appeals Panel

To consider, as part of a statutory review process, appeals against decisions by the Local Authority (or the Governors of voluntary or aided schools) concerning the allocation of places in primary and secondary schools, and decisions by governing bodies concerning the exclusion of pupils.

The School Appeals Panel is drawn from a “pool” of lay members or members with experience in education. However, Councillors are ineligible to serve on the Appeals Panels for schools under local authority control.

(ii). Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE)

SACRE is responsible for advising the local authority on matters concerning the teaching of religious education and collective acts of worship; it decides on applications for determination of cases in which requirements for Christian collective worship are not to apply; and may require the local authority to review its agreed syllabus. The membership should be politically proportionate, with 6 members being 2 Labour, 2 Conservative, 1 Green and 1 Liberal Democrat.

(iii). Wirral Schools Forum (Funding Consultative Group)

The Forum makes recommendations in respect of the allocation of funding to schools and academies from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) received from the DfE. The Forum must be consulted on any changes to Schools and Early Years funding formulae, arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs and funding to meet statutory duties or other agreed commitments. In the composition of the Forum, the Council’s three representatives act only as observers. The membership should be politically proportionate, with 3 members being 1 Labour, 1 Conservative and 1 Green.

Advisory Committees and Working Parties

3.2 The following is a list of advisory and consultative bodies that were retained or created in 2023/2024 to assist the Committee in its work.

(i). Young People’s Advisory Group

To act as a forum for young people to raise their issues and concerns with local elected members, showcasing youth work delivery across the four constituencies of Wirral.

(ii). Corporate Parenting Panel

Under its Terms of Reference, the Children, Young People and Education Committee is responsible for the appointment of a Sub-Committee and Working Group of five (5) or more members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. The membership should be politically proportionate, with 5 members being 2 Labour, 2 Conservative, 1 Green. Furthermore [two] non-voting co-opted young people with recent (within the last five years) direct experience of being looked after by or receiving services as a care leaver from the Council should be appointed. The Panel has delegated authority to exercise responsibility for the Council's functions relating to the delivery by or on behalf of the Council, of Corporate Parenting functions with the exception to policy decisions which will remain with the Children and Young People's Committee.

(iii). Schools' JCC (formerly Headteachers and Teachers JCC)

To meet with teachers and school representatives to discuss educational issues.

Policy Development Work

Purpose

- 3.3.1 The purpose of policy development work is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the council's service provision and procedures (or those services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants). However, it is not possible to examine every service or activity in detail, so it is important for the Policy and Service Committees to prioritise and plan its work programme for the year to be taken forward through the committee, or a dedicated task and finish group.

Scope

- 3.3.2 The Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section 4) states that the Policy and Services Committees are to adopt policy development working practices when undertaking their functions to review the Council's actions or to review or otherwise scrutinise outside bodies and processes. The Policy and Services Committees may conduct policy development to:
- Review decisions made or actions taken by the Authority in so far as they have a direct impact on the role or functions of the Committee and the Committee can make recommendations to the relevant Committee on policies, budget and service delivery.
 - Undertake reviews and make recommendations on services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants where this does not fall within the role or remit of another service committee or where it relates to cross cutting issues,

including the review and monitoring of contractual and operational performance of shared service partnerships, joint ventures and outside organisations to which the Council makes a resource contribution, focusing on examination of the benefits of the Council's contribution and the extent to which the body concerned makes a contribution to the achievement of the Council's priorities as outlined in the Council Plan 2023 - 2027.

Process

3.3.3 A suggested process for determining and prioritising policy development topics is outlined at Appendix 1. This includes:

- **Identify potential issues –**
 - Consulting with all Members of Policy and Service Committees, Senior Leaders and Council Officers.
 - Looking at Wirral Council Plan priorities, Directorate Business Plans, the Forward Plan of the Council, as well as the MTFs.
 - Considering events and decisions in the Council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets.
 - Reviewing the Council's risk register - analysis of risk registers on an ongoing basis will mean that scrutiny can understand what the impacts might be if risks are likely to occur, and what steps can be taken to mitigate.
 - Evaluating previous Council performance and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work.
 - Carrying out work to engage with local people, for example through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.
 - Reviewing customer complaints to identify any reoccurring themes.
- **Prioritise topics** - Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.
- **Plan policy development and scrutiny work** - Decide which policy topics to review and include them in the work programme.
- **Review and evaluate** - Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added.

3.3.4 For every item on the policy development work programme, it should be clear:

- What is the issue/activity/project under consideration?
- What would the Policy and Service Committee be asked to do?
- What are the reasons for/expected benefits of policy development in this area?
- Strategic considerations (aligned to the new Council Plan and underpinning strategic framework).
- Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is a requirement under the Council's Constitution to appoint Members to various panels, advisory committees and working parties.
- 5.2 There is a requirement under the Admission Appeals Code 2012 to appoint an Independent Appeal Panel to consider Admission Appeals and Exclusion Reviews.
- 5.3 There is a requirement under the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012 for Local Authorities to constitute a Schools Forum.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT; STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is a requirement under the Council's Constitution to appoint Members to various panels, advisory committees and working parties.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

- 8.1 It is for political groups to decide how they wish to allocate their committee places.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

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APPENDICES

1. Statutory and Advisory Committee membership for the last municipal year, 2023/24.
2. Appendix 2 – Policy Development Timeline and Topic Selection Process

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous reports on the appointment of panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties and amendments made during the year and the Council's Constitution.

Local Government Association Corporate Parenting Resource Park
Admission Appeals Code 2012

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|---|---------------------|
| Council | 22 May 2024 |
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 21 June 2023 |
| Council | 24 May 2023 |
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 21 June 2022 |
| Council | 25 May 2022 |
| Children, Young People and Education Committee | 15 June 2021 |
| Council | 26 May 2021 |