

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 25 JUNE 2009

### REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

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##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs members of new government guidance on Children's Trusts which relates to inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families. In response to the guidance and self review by the partnership it is proposed that Wirral Children's Trust partnership arrangements are amended.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Wirral Children's Trust is a local partnership which brings together the organisations responsible for services for children, young people and families in a shared commitment to improving children's lives. Local authorities lead Children's Trusts through the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services.
- 1.2 This report is in response to national guidelines for Children's Trusts and self review by the partnership. The proposed new trust arrangements amend the structure of the trust with the formation of a Children's Trust Board and a Children's Trust Executive to replace the current Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and Management Boards respectively. Further details are in Appendix 1 with the new structure shown on page 7.
- 1.3 Government guidance (Children's Trusts: Statutory Guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children young people and their families) issued in November 2008 outlines proposed legislation to clarify the purpose and role of Children's Trusts and to extend the partners. The new guidance raises the bar for Children's Trust partners to champion and take responsibility for achieving measurable improvements in the lives of children across all five Every Child Matters outcomes (Being Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Positive Contribution, Social and Economic Well Being). The proposals aim to help partners engage more effectively within the Children's Trust and to promote a step change in early intervention, in narrowing the gap, and in the involvement of schools. The new partners will include maintained schools, sixth form and further education colleges, and Job Centre Plus.
- 1.4 The recent Baby P case resulted in the Lord Laming report 'The Protection of children in England: A progress report' and the government response action plan (The protection of children in England: Action plan. The government's response to Lord Laming). In addition to the actions proposed on safeguarding arrangements nationally the reports refer to the work of Children's Trusts to ensure the foundations are in place to implement the recommendations. A self review by the Children's partnership resulted in the proposed amendments to the Children's Trust arrangements and the new Memorandum of Understanding.

1.5 The proposed Wirral Children's Trust Memorandum of Understanding is designed to provide an effective and transparent framework and clarity of roles and responsibilities to sustain and improve outcomes for Wirral's children and young people.

**2. Financial implications**

All costs for Wirral Children's Trust are met through members.

**3. Staffing implications**

Wirral Children's Trust involves staff members who are currently employed by Wirral Council and partner agencies in the borough.

**4. Equal opportunities implications**

There are none directly attributable to the memorandum.

**5. Community safety implications**

There are none directly attributable to the memorandum.

**6. Local Agenda 21 implications**

There are none directly attributable to the memorandum.

**7. Planning implications**

There are none directly attributable to the memorandum.

**8. Anti-poverty implications**

There are none directly attributable to the memorandum.

**9. Social inclusion implications**

Wirral Children's Trust will operate on the basis of principles that actively value the benefits of diversity and ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity.

**10. Local Member Support implications**

Representation by elected members on the Wirral Children's Trust Board is unchanged.

**11. Background papers**

11.1 Children's Trusts: DCSF Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families (November 2008).

11.2 The protection of children in England: A Progress Report. The Lord Laming (March, 2009).

11.3 The protection of children in England: Action plan. The government's response to Lord Laming (May, 2009).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That members note the new Children's Trust guidance.
2. That the proposed Wirral Children's Trust Memorandum of Understanding be approved by Cabinet.
3. That a further report be submitted to Cabinet as the national proposals move to a statutory basis in law.

**Howard Cooper**  
**Director of Children's Services**