

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor Bernie Mooney
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>	Children and Families
<b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Paul Boyce, Director of Children's Services

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

**1 VULNERABLE CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL**

Members are aware we continue to work tirelessly to put the improvements in place which were needed following our Ofsted inspection in 2016. I am delighted at the pace and scale of the improvements, and I want to place on record my thanks to Elected Members on our Improvement Board and Scrutiny Committee for their support and insights.

The ongoing monitoring visits from Ofsted have now been completed, and the next visit from the Department will be a full re-inspection. I am confident that the work we have done, the investments in staff and services, will result in the inspectors finding a much-improved service when they return.

The problems Ofsted rightly highlighted have been addressed. Despite a period of unprecedented financial pressure, I am proud of this Council and my colleagues for finding the resources to invest in these services. That investment is paying dividends for vulnerable young people throughout Wirral.

This council has ploughed £20 million extra investment into children's services, we brought in experienced leadership and anyone who visits Wirral's children's services now will find a better resourced, better focused and better managed children's services than ever before.

We have reduced the number of agency workers supporting vulnerable children, increased the number of safeguarding staff and fund the increased cost of placements for young people in care.

Despite clear signs our children's services is making good progress we are most definitely not resting on our laurels. This is an ongoing process of improvement which we must never allow to stop, and I will be making sure Wirral's children receive the best care possible.

Read more about this in the [Wirral Globe](#).

I would like to also highlight several other developments to Members:

- We continued our drive to recruit foster carers through our 'Big Heart' campaign, and recently hosted a celebration event for long-serving foster carers. These local heroes have a combined total of more than 370 years in fostering, which I am sure you will agree is incredible. Members can read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).
- The positive results from our ongoing financial strategy continue to allow us to make investments in services. One of the most recent announcements was the creation of a state of the art 'sports barn' at New Brighton Primary. This sports barn is a vital development for the school to ensure children are able to participate in sports and enjoy the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).
- It is also important to highlight for Members the ongoing performance of our schools. Pupils continue to achieve better grades in key subjects, like English and maths, year on year, with Wirral schools outperforming many across the region. Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).

Other important points for Members to be aware of include:

- Work undertaken by the Early Years Quality Improvement and Training Team to support providers continues to have an impact, with 97.7% of providers judged good or better by Ofsted.
- There are more pupils achieving a grade 4 or above in English with attainment above the national average, and this year more disadvantaged pupils attained grade 4+ in English. More Wirral pupils achieved a Grade 4+ in English and Mathematics with attainment being well above the national average and an improvement from last year.

## **2 CABINET MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

Members will be aware I will not be standing for re-election in May, and this is therefore my last Council meeting.

I have immensely enjoyed my time as a Councillor, and I will continue to do all I can to improve my local community. I have been particularly lucky to hold the portfolio for children's services these past two years, where I have seen first-hand the lifesaving work which our services provide.

Our workforce is our most valuable resource, they work under imaginable pressure to do the best for Wirral's most vulnerable residents, and it has been an honour to work alongside them.

I want to use this opportunity to highlight what a pleasure and privilege it has been to serve Wirral residents and work alongside you all in this Chamber.