

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

WORK PROGRAMME

Report from/author: Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

This item advises Members of the current work programme and allows the Committee to adjust it in the light of latest priorities, issues and circumstances. It gives Members the opportunity to shape and direct the Committee's activities over the year.

1. Budget and policy framework
 - 1.1. Under Chapter 4, Part 5 of the Constitution – Overview and Scrutiny Rules, paragraph 21.1 (xv) General terms of reference, each overview and scrutiny Committee has the responsibility for setting its own work programme.
2. Background
 - 2.1. Appendix 1 to this report sets out the proposed work programme for the Committee during the current municipal year.
3. Agenda planning meeting
 - 3.1. Members will be aware that Overview and Scrutiny Committees hold agenda planning meetings on a regular basis. These give officers guidance on information that Members wish them to provide when scrutinising an issue. An agenda planning meeting took place on 7 September 2021.
 - 3.2. At the meeting, Members suggested that the annual review of the School Place Planning Strategy be removed from the work programme as pre-decision scrutiny due to the weight of the agenda for the meeting scheduled for 30 September 2021. Members of the Committee would receive the report via the Cabinet agenda despatch and would be invited to refer questions to the lead officer who would then collate responses that would be circulated via a briefing note to the Committee for information.

3.3. At the meeting it was also recommended to add the People's Strategy to the meeting scheduled for 1 December 2021, as pre-decision scrutiny.

4. Cabinet Forward Plan

4.1. The latest Forward Plan of forthcoming Cabinet decisions was published on 20 September 2021 and can be viewed using the following link:
<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=413&RP=115>

4.2. Set out below is a list of items featuring on the Forward Plan that fall within the terms of reference of the Children and Young People (CYP) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee is asked to identify any items it wishes to consider before the Cabinet decision is taken (where dates permit), other than those already programmed in Appendix 1.

Title: Annual Review of School Place Planning Strategy 2018-22
Description: This report will outline the progress made against Medway's School Place Planning Strategy and will highlight any emerging need for school places and recommendations for Cabinet to consider to ensure that a sufficient supply of school places is maintained.
Anticipated Cabinet Decision Date: 19 October 2021

Title: Annual Fostering Report
Description: This report will provide detail on the Performance of the Council's Fostering Service.
Anticipated Cabinet Decision Date: 19 October 2021

Title: Medway Council Education Strategic Framework
Description: This report will seek Cabinet approval of the Medway Education Strategy 2021 – 2024 and of the Medway School Effectiveness Strategy 2021 – 2024. Alongside the Council's School Place Planning Strategy and the SEND Strategy, these documents form Medway Council's Education Strategic Framework.
Anticipated Cabinet Decision Date: 19 October 2021

Title: Provisional Funding Formula for Mainstream Schools and Academies 2022/23
Description: This report will set out the provisional proposals for the funding formula for mainstream schools and academies for 2022/23.
Anticipated Cabinet Decision Date: 19 October 2021

Title: School Admission Arrangements 2023
Description: This report will provide details of the outcome of consultation on the primary and secondary co-ordinated admission schemes and will seek approval to the proposed 2023 admission arrangements.
Anticipated Cabinet Decision Date: 14 December 2021

Title: People Strategy
Description: This report will ask the Cabinet to approve the People Strategy.
Anticipated Cabinet Decision Date: 11 January 2022

5. Performance Data Workshops

- 5.1. At the Committee's meeting on 5 March 2020, it agreed a number of measures to maximise its involvement and impact in relation to the scrutiny of children's social care.
- 5.2. Part of those measures included the provision of detailed performance data to all members of the Committee on a monthly basis and for performance data workshops to be provided, in between Committees. The purpose of this is to strengthen the capacity for effective scrutiny of performance by providing an informal setting in which detailed analysis of the data can be undertaken. Members can then apply their increased knowledge and understanding to carry out an effective scrutinising role in main committee meetings and in task group activity.
- 5.3. The latest workshop was held virtually on 1 September 2021. This session was attended by the Assistant Director, Children's Social Care, the Head of Service for Children's Social Work and the Independent Scrutineer of the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership who was also the Independent Chair of the Improvement Board.
- 5.4. The session focussed on the child's journey from first referral, what happens during a Child and Family Assessment and what the possible outcomes could be. Members were able to interrogate the performance data that related to this area of children social work.
- 5.5. At the session, Members raised questions relating to caseloads, quality and consistency of practice, re-referral rates and numbers of children subject to a child protection plan. It was also raised that the way staff recorded no further action, did not pick up in the dashboard, the alternative support or signposting that might take place with a family. Officers confirmed this was being reviewed so this information could be better captured to accompany the data set.

6. Implications for looked after children

- 6.1. Members should ensure they focus on outcomes for looked after children. This includes considering their physical health; their emotional health; their safeguarding; their educational attainment and progress; their hopes and aspirations for their adult lives and how looked after young people have their voices heard. We know that looked after children can be more vulnerable to sexual exploitation so particular attention should be given to this. As a corporate parent, Members should be a champion for looked after children and have the same high expectations of them as they would for their own child, grandchild or niece/ nephew.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1. There are no financial or legal implications arising from this report.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. The Committee is asked to agree the work programme as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, subject to accepting the proposed changes, outlined in italic text on Appendix 1.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Children and Young People O&S Committee Work Programme

Background papers

None