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**COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME 2015 -16**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. The Council's Constitution states (Scrutiny Procedure Rule 7) that each Scrutiny Committee will set its own work programme. The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference provide the Committee with the responsibility for the scrutiny of a number of specific service areas. The Committee is also responsible for the scrutiny of a number of policies and strategies that affect children and young people in Cardiff, plus it can undertake investigations into any matters relating to the children and young people of Cardiff.
2. This report provides the Committee with the outcome of its consideration, at a forum meeting of the Committee, of the many issues that it could scrutinise. The resulting prioritised list has been detailed in the calendar, attached at **Appendix C** for consideration and approval.

**Background**

3. Scrutiny plays an essential role in promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council's decision making process and the way in which it delivers services. The main roles of the Scrutiny Committees are:
  - Holding the Cabinet and officers as decision-makers to account.
  - Being a 'critical friend', through questioning how decisions have been made to provide a 'check and balance' to decision makers, adding legitimacy to the decision making process.
  - Undertaking reviews of Council services and policy.
  - Undertaking reviews to develop Council services and policies.

4. The Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2015 agreed to hold a meeting of the whole Committee, in forum mode, to consider items and issues for inclusion on the potential work programme for this municipal year. The Committee, at its forum meeting on 22 July 2014, prioritise the consideration of various performance reports, potential policy development work and potential scrutiny inquiries, for the year.
  
5. The work programming forum considered a list of potential items. Each item was reviewed by the Members and prioritised (1 to 5) for public interest, impact, council performance and context, copy attached at **Appendix A**. The list was sourced from a number of relevant areas:
  - i) Prior Year Committee agendas
  - ii) Requests from previous Committee meetings letters
  - iii) Governance items
  - iv) Cabinet Forward Plan
  - v) Inspection report recommendations
  - vi) Suggestions from Committee Members
  - vii) Suggestions from Council Directors
  - viii) Suggestions from external stakeholders (eg C3SC / Youth Council / LAC)
  - ix) Items carried forward from last years work programme.
  
6. At the work programming forum, Members considered the recent Wales Audit Office (WAO) Corporate Assessment (September 2014) and the subsequent advice to scrutiny committees. This advice aimed to achieve Committee meetings that last no longer than three hours, whilst maintaining robust and appropriate levels of scrutiny across the terms of reference, by ensuring agendas are of a manageable size and that work occurs outside Committee meetings. Members agreed in principle with this approach, with the option to consider additional items if required.
  
7. The Committee also agreed that to aid in focussing the agendas more effectively and maximising the impact of the scrutiny of each item at Committee, Members would adapt the way that issues would be scrutinised in the future to include:

- Reports and briefings to be sent to Members prior to the Committee meeting for their consideration and comment. Should any concerns or questions be raised these would be highlighted at the Committee meeting to enable Cabinet Members and Officers to respond in a timely manner;
- Performance and Budget monitoring reports to be scrutinised by a Committee Panel, meeting throughout the year. The Panel would regularly report back to Committee with their comments, concerns or requests for further investigation at full Committee, to enable Cabinet Members and Officers to respond.

8. To enable the work programme to reflect this more focused approach the Members identified those issues which they had jointly scored as a high priority (4 or 5) (copy attached at **Appendix B**) and further determined whether it would be most appropriate to scrutinise each item either at:

- i) Full Committee
- ii) Briefing report to Committee Members, prior to Committee
- iii) Task & Finish Investigation
- iv) Informal Member Panel, meeting through the year.

9. The resultant collection of items was then programmed into the work programme calendar (copy attached at **Appendix C**) to form a work programme for the full year. The schedule of items detailed below includes the task identified under the four work areas of the Committee, namely:

- Corporate Plan and budget development and delivery – This enables Members to review, challenge and analysis of the Council’s key policy documents affecting Children & Young People.
- Performance and Improvement – These reports enable the Committee to receive inspection reports, regularly review service area performance information, identify areas for further investigation and appraise the effectiveness of improvement actions and their implementation.
- Reports from external bodies – These reports enable the Committee to receive draft copies of partnership, consortium and joint working annual reports, to review objectives and outcomes and assess the impact of the partnerships’ work.

- Reshaping Services – These reports enable the Committee to receive draft proposals, progress reports and draft plans for the development of alternative methods for the delivery of service for children & young people in Cardiff.

## **Issues**

10. The work programme for each Scrutiny Committee identifies various types of scrutiny investigations. Members of the Committee have consistently committed to regularly monitor and review corporate strategies, budget proposals and their delivery, performance and improvement reports, governance reports and reshaping services proposals. The Members agreed to continue this approach as detailed below:

### **Corporate Plan and Budgetary development and delivery**

- Draft Budget / Corporate Plan – at full Committee in February 2016;
- Education Delivery Plan – at full Committee in April 16;
- Children’s Services Delivery Plan – at full Committee in April 16;
- Children’s Services Budgeted Savings – at a quarterly Committee panel– to review the work undertaken to achieve the identified saving in the 2015/16 budget, based on financial data, including the impact of the savings on services; and
- Education Budgeted Savings – at a quarterly Committee panel – to review the work undertaken to achieve the identified saving in the 2015/16 budget, based on financial data including the impact of the savings on services.

### **Performance and Improvement - information and monitoring reports**

#### **Education**

- ESTYN – to continue the review of progress, based around Estyn’s visit schedule, at full Committee;
- Performance of Cardiff Schools – appropriate elements throughout the year, Annual statutory performance report, at full Committee in January 2016;
- Supporting and developing school leaders, Consortium update, at full Committee in November 2015;

- Faith Schools in the red / amber category support, at full Committee in November 2015;
- Faith Schools' Nursery provision, at full Committee in November 2015;
- Long Term Strategy for improving Education, at full Committee in January 2016;
- Youth Service progress report, at full Committee in March 2016;
- Pupil tracking and targeting under achievers, briefing paper to Members in November 2015;
- Supporting teachers in literacy and numeracy, briefing paper to Members in November 2015;
- Improving governance in schools progress report, paper to Members in March 2016;
- Peer to peer school improvement strategy briefing, paper to Members in March 2016;
- Traineeship briefing on young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs), paper to Members in March 2016;
- Partnership work stream progress report, paper to Members in January 2016; and
- Careers Wales support for pupils update report, paper to Members in May 2016.

### **Children's Services**

- Children Services Quarterly performance reports, quarters two and four at full Committee, quarters one and three at a Committee Panel meeting;
- Social Care Director's Statement. This will be a joint Committee meeting with Community and Adult Service Scrutiny Committee, in March and July 2016;
- Review of safeguarding arrangements, at full Committee in December 2015;
- Prevent Strategy, at full Committee in December 2015;
- Education of Looked After Children, at full Committee in March 2016;
- Initial Assessment process and performance, at full Committee in June 2016;
- Mental Health issues for Children & Young People, at full Committee, in June 2016;
- Personal Advisors and support for Care Leavers, briefing paper to Members in December 2015;
- Re-Offending performance, briefing paper to Members June 2016; and
- Initial child protection conferences performance, briefing paper to Members June 2016.

## Reports from external bodies monitoring

- South Central Consortium Annual report, at full Committee in November 2015;
- Families First progress report, at full Committee in September 2015;
- National / Regional Adoption Service, at full Committee in October 2015;
- Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Board, at full Committee in April 2016;
- Corporate Parenting Annual Report, at full Committee in May 2016;
- Integrated family support report, paper to Members March 2016;
- Families First progress report, paper to Members April 2016; and
- Youth Offending Service annual report, report to Members in May 2016.

## Reshaping Services

The Committee has already been made aware of a key service reshape being undertaken. Members expressed their desire to be able to scrutinise the proposal before any decisions have been made.

- Reduced funding available for Children's Play – at full Committee prior to Cabinet.

## Inquiries– to be undertaken by Task & Finish Groups

11. The Committee Members, at the forum meeting, suggested a number of issues that the Committee could include as scrutiny Inquiries, as well as a number of areas for performance monitoring short Inquiries. The Members however identified three potential Inquiries and requested scrutiny officers discuss benefits of each with the service area. The items are:

### ▪ **Schools Causing Concern**

To continue the scrutiny of the advice, support and challenge of Cardiff's schools categorised as causing concern. The Inquiry will take place throughout the year, with head teachers and chairs of governors being either invited in to county hall or visited within their schools.

- **Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People.**

Subject to resources, it is proposed that the second Inquiry will be to assess the robustness of the sexual exploitation strategy and the level of the Council's and partner organisations' response to incidences of child sexual exploitation. The inquiry is due to take place between October 2015 and March 2016.

- **Listening Event with Young people.**

Subject to resources, it is proposed to undertake a listening event in partnership with the Cardiff Youth Council or a third sector organisation to establish the views of young people on issues of concern. The listening event will be developed to ensure that its output will be of benefit to the Committee, Council, third sector organisation and young people.

- **Community Infrastructure Levy.**

To set up a joint sub-committee with all Committees to investigate the implications of the Community Infrastructure Levy and changes to Section 106 agreements and develop recommendations for the future use of these powers to fund Cardiff's infrastructure requirements. Members will consider whether it should be adopted, contributing to decision-making around the setting of the Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule, charging rates and to how infrastructure projects will be prioritised, and examining governance issues around the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### **Pre-Decision Scrutiny and Call-in**

12. The Committee may also wish to undertake an evaluation of proposals prior to their consideration by the Cabinet, or prior to their implementation. Under these circumstances the issues can require detailed scrutiny and the Chair of the Committee will identify which items the Committee can have the most impact on. As such the work programme has included sufficient flexibility to enable the Committee to undertake this work effectively. Items already identified on the Cabinet Forward plan include:

- i) School Organisation Plan proposals, at various times throughout the year;
- ii) Looked after Children Strategy, November 2015
- iii) School Admissions, March 2016.

### **Way Forward**

13. It is suggested that the Committee considers agreeing the task & finish and pre-decision topics as proposed *in paragraph 11 and 12* of this report, and further agrees the draft timetable of issues for the Committee as set out in **paragraph 10** above and summarised in **Appendix C**. Members may also wish to agree to set up Member Panels to monitor and review departmental performance and budgets.

### **Legal Implications**

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and



review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended:

- To consider the information set out in **paragraph 10** of the report and agree the proposed Work Plan Timetable for 2015/16 as set out in **Appendix C**.
- To agree to set up a performance Member panel and a Budget monitoring Member panel, in accordance with Part 1 of the Scrutiny procedure rules, with authority for the Chair and Operational Manager (Scrutiny Services) to approve the report for presentation to the Cabinet Member.
- To agree to undertake the Task & Finish Group Inquiries as set out in **paragraph 11**, in accordance with Part 1 of the Scrutiny procedure rules. with authority for the Chair and Operational Manager (Scrutiny Services) to approve the report for presentation to the Cabinet Member, and to seek nominations for the Sexual Exploitation of Children inquiry and a potential CIL joint sub-committee inquiry.
- To seek nominations for the membership of the performance and budget monitoring panels as set out in **paragraph 7**.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**

**Director of Governance and Legal Services**

**8 September 2015**