

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 13TH JUNE, 2013

**AT 6.00 PM
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2
AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE
DUDLEY**

If you (or anyone you know) is attending the meeting and requires assistance to access the venue and/or its facilities, could you please contact Democratic Services in advance and we will do our best to help you

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

MEETINGS IN DUDLEY COUNCIL HOUSE

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Your ref:

Our ref:

Please ask for:
Mr J. Jablonski

Telephone No.
(01384) 815243

5TH June, 2013

Dear Councillor


Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
Thursday, 13th June, 2013 – 6.00PM

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to be held on Thursday, 13th June, 2013 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley to consider the business set out in the agenda below.

Please note that it is proposed that an informal development session be held at the conclusion of the formal business.

The agenda and public reports are available on the Council's Website www.dudley.gov.uk and follow the links to 'Councillors in Dudley' and the Committee Management Information System.

Yours sincerely



Director of Corporate Resources

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

4. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st March, 2013 (copy herewith)

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ANNUAL SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2013/14 (PAGES 1 - 8)

To consider the report of the Lead Officer and the Director of Corporate Resources .

6. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS(PAGES 9 – 13)

To consider a report of the Director of Corporate Resources

7. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE 11.8 (IF ANY).

To: **All Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillors Arshad, Bills, Boleyn, Casey, Hill, Islam, Marrey, Perks, Mrs Simms, Vickers and Mrs Walker; Rev.A Wickens, Mrs M Ward, Mrs M Verdegem, Mr M Lynch, Mr C Bruton, Mr S.Taylor, Mr L.Ridney and Mrs L.Coulter

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 21st March, 2013 at 6.00pm
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor S Turner (Chair)
Councillor Boleyn (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Attwood, Casey, Harley, J Jones, Marrey, Mrs Simms, Sykes and Mrs Walker; Mrs Coulter, Mr Lynch, Mr Taylor, Mr Tinsley, Mr Ridley and Mrs Verdegem.

OFFICERS

Health Reform Programme Lead – Lead Officer to the Committee; Director of Children's Services, Assistant Directors of Children's Services (Education Services) and (Quality and Partnership), and the Democratic Services Manager (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services (Councillor Crumpton).

WITNESSES GIVING EVIDENCE TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Ian Austin MP, Andy Griffiths (Head teacher of Ellowes Hall School), Alison Pell (Head teacher - Hawbush Primary School), Stephanie Sherwood (Head teacher - Dormston School).

OBSERVERS

Councillors Ali, Foster and Ridley.

30

CHRISTINA EDKINS

Prior to the formal business, the Chair referred to the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Christina Edkins, a pupil at Leasowes High School, on 7th March, 2013. The Committee observed a period of silence as a token of respect to the memory of Christina Edkins.

31

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Arshad, Mrs Billingham and Bills; Mr Songole, Reverend Wickens and Mrs Ward.

32 SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillors Harley and Sykes were serving in place of Councillors Mrs Billingham and Bills for this meeting of the Committee only.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair informed the Committee of his employment by Ian Austin MP, who was present at the meeting and would give evidence to the Committee under Agenda Item No. 10.

Members of the Committee, who were also school governors, reminded the meeting of the individual schools with which they had such an association.

34 MINUTES

In connection with Minute No. 26 (Revenue Budget Strategy 2013/14), a Member questioned the inclusion of a resolution in the Minute as she was of the opinion that no such resolution had been put to the meeting. The Chair stated that the resolution reflected the recommendation in the report, which was to note the proposals. An undertaking was given to review the Minute in consultation with the relevant Democratic Services Officer.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the comments set out above in relation to Minute No. 26, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14th November, 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed.

35 SCRUTINY – A NEW APPROACH FOR THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report of the Lead Officer on a review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements in advance of the 2013/14 municipal year. As a 'pilot' of the proposed intention for Scrutiny Committees to focus on identified themes, the theme of this meeting would be 'journey to improvement' taking account of the legislative background, school performance data, Ofsted outcomes, future developments, the role of the local authority and the views of invited witnesses.

A Member expressed concerns as to how the arrangements for this meeting had been developed without wider consultation, particularly in relation to the invitation of witnesses. Reference was also made to the fact that the Scrutiny review had not been approved by the Cabinet as indicated in the Lead Officer's report.

The Chair stated that the Council's governance arrangements were under review and that as the first phase of this, the Community Forums had been launched. The Council had agreed that the existing overview and scrutiny arrangements and Scrutiny Committee structure be reviewed and that recommendations be presented to the Council in advance of the 2013/14 municipal year. This review was being led by Scrutiny Chairs. As part of this process, it had been suggested that this Committee undertake a 'pilot' scrutiny of a single themed subject. Scrutiny Chairs would review the pilot in advance of recommendations being submitted to the Cabinet and Council. At this stage, no final decisions had been taken on the scrutiny review.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Lead Officer for making the arrangements for this meeting at short notice. All learning points would be used to inform the development of the Council's future overview and scrutiny arrangements.

STANDARDS REPORT – PERFORMANCE DATA

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services on the validated data available concerning the performance of schools in the Borough. The Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Director (Education Services) gave a detailed presentation on the statistical information in the report and provided updates and responses to individual points raised by the Scrutiny Committee.

In the discussion concerning the Early Years foundation stage and Key Stage 1 statistics, a Member queried the costs of the training programme referred to under the heading of support for Dudley Schools and asked if any schools had declined the support. The Assistant Director of Children's Services undertook to provide a breakdown of the available information.

A Member questioned why special school representatives had not been invited to attend the Scrutiny Committee. The Director of Children's Services undertook to provide Ofsted outcomes concerning special schools. Although it was accepted there were difficulties in making statistical comparisons, the Committee felt that it would have been appropriate to invite a representative from a special school to give a more holistic view.

Reference was made to the comment in the report that evidence from schools suggested that teaching, which met the needs of individual children, had reduced the number of children being considered for statements of educational need. The Assistant Director (Education Services) undertook to provide additional information concerning this point.

In relation to Key Stage 2 information, reference was made to the position of Dudley in the national performance tables. In acknowledging that the 2012 figures had been disappointing, the Assistant Director (Education Services) referred to the need to view the trended information over a longer period of time and noted that there was evidence of continued improvement over the last 10 years. The Director of Children's Services assured the Committee that efforts were being maintained, in partnership with Schools, to ensure continued improvements for the future. The Director stated that the target was for every school to be a good school.

In the discussion on the Key Stage 3 and 4 information, the Committee referred to issues associated with parent and carer support to supplement learning within schools at all stages of a child's educational development. A particular concern had been raised in relation to mathematics and the Committee supported further work to promote support amongst parents and carers. The Committee referred to the key emphasis placed on mathematics and English results and the ongoing support to schools to address improvements.

Members noted the work to improve outcomes relating to Looked After Children. The progress compared favourably to the national average, however, it was acknowledged that further work was needed to maintain progress for the Council as a corporate parent. The Director of Children's Services indicated that Dudley MBC had given evidence to a Parliamentary Select Committee in recognition of the support it provided to Looked After Children.

Reference was made to a national review of the GCSE process and GCSE equivalent courses, such as those with a vocational element. The review presented a range of challenges to all authorities as it had been indicated nationally that the GCSE or equivalent qualifications would be harder to obtain in the future.

In relation to the Key Stage 5 information, the Director of Children's Services reported that effective working relationships were maintained with colleges to ensure that a suitable range of courses were available. The Chair indicated that post 16 education issues would be considered by the Committee at future meetings. In response to a specific question from a Member, the Director of Children's Services undertook to provide a definition of the term 'size' as included in the table in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report and the comments of the Committee be noted.
- (2) That the Committee support the ongoing work to encourage greater parent and carer support to supplement learning within schools at all stages of a child's educational development.
- (3) That, in connection with (2) above, the Committee endorse the further work to promote support in relation to mathematics as an identified area for improvement.

- (4) That the thanks of the Committee be extended to all Schools and officers involved for their ongoing endeavours to improve the performance of Schools in the Borough.
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37 DUDLEY SCHOOLS OFSTED OUTCOMES

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services on Dudley Schools Ofsted outcomes in the period April 2012 to December 2012.

The Committee noted the report and the comments of the Assistant Director (Education Services) that the report only included schools assessed in the period covered by the report. Additional changes to the Ofsted inspection framework had now been introduced. These changes raised the level of the inspection criteria leading to additional challenges for all schools inspected under the new framework.

38 THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY – THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY DUTIES IN REGARD TO SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services giving an outline of the statutory powers and duties of the Council in relation to school/educational performance. The Assistant Director (Education Services) gave an overview of the significant changes in the role of the local authority in the context of the statutory duty to pay due attention to the quality of education and educational outcomes.

A Member referred to the implications for the delivery of statutory duties in the context of the increasingly limited and declining resources available to the local authority. The Director of Children's Services acknowledged that this was an issue for all public authorities. Funding would continue to be sought from any available sources to support the work of the Directorate. Reference was also made to the changing relationship whereby funding was provided to schools directly and the local authority retained a role to ensure that resources were used effectively.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Children's Services referred to the arrangements under which an academy school had the option to 'buy back' services from the local authority. Reference was made to a potential situation whereby an academy school refused support from the local authority, potentially putting the authority at risk of breaching statutory obligations. The Director expressed the hope that all academies would engage with the local authority, however, there was an option to write to the Department for Education or Ofsted expressing concerns if necessary. It was acknowledged that many issues relating to academy schools were still evolving.

The Committee heard representations from the following witnesses, who had been invited to give evidence to this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

- (a) Ian Austin MP submitted his views on making education and skills the main priority in the Borough; improving school standards; the need to follow good practice examples of leadership; focus on improvements in English and mathematics; issues relating to the higher standards demanded nationally and the need to attract new investment to the Borough with the associated need to develop the skills required and local job opportunities. Reference was made to the setting of ambitious targets for the improvement of educational standards and to establish a long-term ambition to develop University facilities in the Borough. These aspirations would have the effect of creating opportunities for Dudley residents, similar those afforded to people anywhere else in the country.

Following the presentation, the Committee asked questions and expressed views on the evidence submitted. In particular, a Member referred to the forthcoming national changes to rules for GCSE examinations, which would have significant implications on any targets set locally. If any targets set locally were unrealistic and not achievable, they might have an adverse and negative effect. However, there was a general view that the Council needed to adopt a strategic plan to aspire to make continued improvements over the short, medium and longer term.

A Member referred to the length of the school day and the summer school holidays and the possibility of doing more to engage children in learning activities during this time. However, it was acknowledged that this needed to be considered across the spectrum of educational provision. The Chair emphasised that education was already considered as a key priority of the Council.

Reference was made to the closure of schools for use as polling stations during elections. It was agreed that representations be made to the Chief Executive, in his capacity as Returning Officer, to review the use of schools as polling stations to avoid unnecessary and avoidable school closures.

The Committee thanked Ian Austin MP for attending the meeting and for his contribution to the discussion. Mr Austin concluded by commending the college developments in Dudley Town Centre and expressed the hope that Dudley would have a University Technical College (UTC) at some point in the future.

- (b) Andy Griffiths (Head teacher of Ellowes Hall School), made submissions to the Committee concerning the leadership approach adopted by his school and the associated improvements that had been demonstrated in recent achievements by the School. Specific mention was made to the improvements in mathematics results and the ongoing efforts in this subject area. Mr Griffiths acknowledged improvements in the support provided to the School by the local authority.

A Member referred to the focus on English and mathematics and the possible detrimental effects on other subjects forming part of the curriculum. The Committee noted the importance placed on these subjects in the judgements made by Ofsted.

The Committee acknowledged the achievements of Ellowes Hall and thanked Mr Griffiths for his attendance and contributions to the meeting.

- (c) Alison Pell (Head teacher - Hawbush Primary School) referred to the vision of offering opportunities for life and the clear aspiration to strive for better results, taking account of each child as an individual. Reference was made to the systems in place to monitor the progress of each child and understand their needs.

Ms Pell commented on the relationship with secondary schools to achieve shared aspirations. She referred to the progress made by the school in relation to continuous improvement and thanked the local authority for the new building, which had improved the facilities at Hawbush Primary School.

The Committee noted the view that a good school environment made a positive contribution to improving overall performance. The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services congratulated the school for their work with the local community.

In conclusion, Ms Pell thanked the local authority for the ongoing support, particularly through the development of School Improvement Plans. The Committee acknowledged the achievements at Hawbush and thanked Ms Pell for her attendance and contributions to the meeting.

- (d) Stephanie Sherwood (Head teacher - Dormston School) made representations to the Committee on particular challenges to be addressed by her School following comments made on the 2012 examination results. She referred to significant challenges associated with working with parents and opportunities for working in partnership with other agencies to address issues, which were not solely the responsibility of the school in isolation.

In relation to examination results, reference was made to the system changes in August 2012, which had resulted in significant and detrimental implications for the anticipated results, particularly in mathematics. Ms Sherwood outlined the work undertaken to address issues that had been identified as requiring attention with a view to making future improvements with the support of the local authority. The intention was to do the best possible for each individual child and the School accepted the need to make improvements.

The Committee expressed concern about the frequency of changes to the inspection framework and the associated requirements of Ofsted. Members expressed the view that the best interests of each child should be the paramount consideration in all circumstances notwithstanding the targets set. Reference was again made to the potential impact of national changes in GCSE examination requirements and grade boundaries.

The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services apologised and expressed regret for any difficulties that had been caused to Dormston School following inaccurate quotes that had appeared in the press relating to the examination results in 2012. The Committee acknowledged the ongoing work at Dormston School and thanked Ms Sherwood for her attendance and contributions to the meeting.

(The meeting stood adjourned at 8.50pm and reconvened at 8.55pm)

40

LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Committee received copies of a presentation from the Director of Children's Services on Local Authority Responsibilities In Relation To The Quality Of Education. The presentation outlined that the local authority was striving for the best possible outcomes on the overall 'journey' for every school to be a good school. The presentation would be used as the basis of ongoing discussions with school governors and head teachers.

The presentation provided evidence of the work of the Directorate of Children's Services to support schools, discussed the likely expectations of future inspections and demonstrated work towards future improvement.

A Member commented on the role of the Scrutiny Committee and the need to demonstrate practical outcomes from scrutiny. The Chair acknowledged the need for Scrutiny Chairs to reflect on practical experiences in refining future proposals. This meeting had been intended as a pilot and the new approach to scrutiny would be developed further in the 2013/14 municipal year.

The Chair thanked the Lead Officer and the Director of Children's Services for their efforts in making the arrangements for this meeting at short notice.

41 RESPONSE BY CABINET MEMBER FOR INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services noted all the comments made by the Committee and expressed his support for the culture of 'working together'. Reference was made to the need to make the best use of the resources the authority had available to achieve improvements, including the extended use of school facilities beyond the usual hours to support adults in assisting with their children's development.

Particular concern was expressed regarding the local impact of the frequency of changes made nationally in relation to targets for schools and the associated requirements of Ofsted.

The Cabinet Member expressed the view that a more unified approach was necessary for local authorities to challenge the Government and Ofsted in this regard. He urged a more co-operative approach in the future with everyone working together to meet the challenges associated with the 'journey to improvement' and to focus on the associated outcomes for all concerned.

42 MR D PERRETT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES (EDUCATION SERVICES)

The Committee noted that Dave Perrett (Assistant Director of Children's Services - Education Services) would shortly be leaving the authority and this would be his last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. The Chair thanked Mr Perrett for his services to the Council and wished him success in the future.

43 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11.8 AND INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no questions asked under this agenda item.

The meeting ended at 9.28 pm

CHAIR

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 13th June, 2013

Report of the Lead Officer and the Director of Corporate Resources

Terms of Reference and Annual Scrutiny Programme 2013/14

Purpose of Report

1. To note the terms of reference of the Committee and the items included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for detailed consideration by this Scrutiny Committee during 2013/14.

Background

2. On 25th April, 2013, the Cabinet considered a report on a review of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements. The recommendations from Scrutiny Chairs were endorsed by the Cabinet and formally approved at the annual meeting of the Council on 16th May, 2013.
3. The principles of the new structure are to strengthen the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements; to ensure proper democratic accountability and to promote confidence in the conduct of the Council's business. The new scrutiny arrangements are also set in the context of significant financial pressures faced by the Council and the need to focus limited resources in the most effective way.
4. The review was also based on the following principles, as agreed by Scrutiny Chairs:-
 - That the former informal "Chairs of Scrutiny Committees" meeting be formalised into an "Overview and Scrutiny Management Board".
 - That a revised structure of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be adopted, including Scrutiny Committees to carry out detailed scrutiny reviews and a separate Scrutiny Committee with a remit for Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency and Effectiveness.
 - That the role of Scrutiny Committees be developed further to comprise:-
 - The adoption of the "Parliamentary Select Committee" model by undertaking single item in-depth scrutiny investigations/inquiries with reports from the Scrutiny Chair being presented to the Cabinet/Council.

- Being more strategic and selective in selecting topics for scrutiny with Scrutiny Committees focussing on in-depth investigations. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will have a role in overseeing and co-ordinating the annual scrutiny programme.

- Enhancement of the role of Scrutiny Committees in policy development by carrying out the in-depth scrutiny reviews as referred to above.

- All scrutiny "Call-ins" to be determined by the Management Board (with provision for inviting statutory co-opted members in the case of Education matters).

- Cabinet Members/Chief Officers and others to attend scrutiny meetings to give evidence/reports if required by the Scrutiny Committee (given advance notice).

- The retention of statutory co-opted members on the Scrutiny Committee that considers "Education" matters (ie: Children's Services).

- The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to submit an annual report to the Council on corporate scrutiny activity.

- The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and individual Scrutiny Committees to be submitted to Council.

5. The approved terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committee are set out in Appendix 1. The terms of reference of the Committee also gives a clear indication of the Cabinet portfolios and Directorate functions within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

6. Scrutiny Committees have discretion to set their own programme of meetings to carry out the reviews that are allocated to them. Meetings of the five Scrutiny Committees have also been scheduled in November, 2013 to undertake detailed scrutiny of the Council's revenue budget proposals.

7. In April, 2013, Scrutiny Chairs considered the development of a draft Annual Scrutiny Programme for the 2013/14 municipal year taking account of the views of Cabinet Members and Directors as part of their business planning cycle. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board formally endorsed the Annual Scrutiny Plan at its meeting on 29th May, 2013. The items for detailed consideration by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee during 2013/14 are:

- Safeguarding Standards within the Borough and Children's Services Contribution
- Looked After Children – Provision and Outcomes
- Early Intervention Strategy for the Borough

8. Appendix 2 gives more detailed information on the topics set out in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2013/14 as referred to in paragraph 7 above.
9. Immediately following this first formal meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, an informal development session will be held for members and officers to discuss the scope of the topics to be scrutinised; the process of gathering information (including the 'witnesses' to be invited to attend) and the timescales for carrying out the reviews (with timescales for both informal and formal meetings).
10. Under the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, as contained in the Constitution, all Scrutiny Committees previously had the discretion to include a standard item entitled 'Public Forum' on the agenda to facilitate members of the public asking questions on any matter falling within the terms of reference of the Committee. This discretion remains under the revised Scrutiny arrangements and the Committee is invited to express views on whether such an item should be included on future agendas.
11. The revised scrutiny arrangements will be subject to ongoing review and further consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board during the municipal year.

Finance

12. The costs of operating the revised scrutiny arrangements will be contained within existing budgetary allocations.

Law

13. Scrutiny Committees are established in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the requirements of the Council's Constitution, which was adopted under the Local Government Act 2000, subsequent legislation and associated Regulations and Guidance.


Equality Impact

14. Provision exists within the recommended scrutiny arrangements for overview and scrutiny to be undertaken of the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

Recommendations

15. That the terms of reference of the Committee, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.
16. That the issues contained in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2013/14, as referred to in paragraph 7 and Appendix 2, be noted.

17. That an informal development session be held for members and officers, at the conclusion of the formal business of this meeting, to discuss how they wish to progress the items for detailed consideration by the Committee during 2013/14.
18. That the Committee consider the possible inclusion of a "Public Forum" session as a standing item of business on the agenda for future meetings.



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Philip Tart
Director of Corporate Resources



... ..
Diane Channings
Lead Officer

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List of Background Papers

Reports and minutes of the Cabinet dated 25th April, 2013
Reports and minutes of the Council dated 16th May, 2013
Reports and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board dated 29th May, 2013

Terms of Reference

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

In accordance with any relevant statutory requirements and the Annual Scrutiny Programme approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:-

- (a) To undertake in-depth scrutiny investigations, inquiries and reviews in accordance with the Annual Scrutiny Programme;
- (b) To contribute to policy development by carrying out the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Directorate of Children's Services and the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning.

To submit reports and recommendations to the Cabinet and/or the Council on the outcomes of scrutiny investigations, inquiries and reviews.

To make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on any proposed amendments to the Annual Scrutiny Programme.

| Children's Services Scrutiny Committee | | |
|--|---------------|--|
| Portfolio | | Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning |
| Area for Scrutiny | | Safeguarding Standards within the Borough and Children's Services Contribution |
| | | |
| Council Priorities | | |
| | Council Plan: | Keeping children and young people safe |
| Context | | Child protection and safeguarding are national and local priorities. Over the last fifty years society has become increasingly aware of the high numbers of children that are at risk of harm and neglect. It has also become more intolerant of those public services which fail to keep young people safe. Consequently all local authorities have seen an increase in the number of children being taken into care. |
| Rationale | | The Council must work with its partners to keep children and young people safe from harm and neglect. This is one of its highest priorities. The complexity and challenging nature of work in this area must be understood by all those who are connected with the Council and everyone needs to appreciate what is needed to improve services. |
| What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee? | | <p>To understand and support our activities to promote safeguarding.</p> <p>To engage in the dialogue about other measures which may make our safeguarding work even more effective.</p> |

| Children's Services Scrutiny Committee | | |
|--|---------------|---|
| Portfolio | | Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning |
| Area for Scrutiny | | Looked after Children Provision and Outcomes |
| | | |
| Council Priorities | | |
| | Council Plan: | Improves services to, and outcomes of, looked after children |
| Context | | All local authorities have experienced a rise in the number of children and young people who have been taken into care. Society has become much more intolerant of agencies and families that fail to keep young people safe. There is growing evidence about the level of poor parenting which exists in the community and which puts children at risk. There is also growing concern about the relatively poor outcomes achieved by many care leavers e.g. in terms of educational qualifications, poverty and offending. |
| Rationale | | Many factors have a bearing on this phenomenon. It is essential that the Council keeps young people safe from harm and neglect, but at the same time we need to manage the costs of doing so. These two drivers create a dilemma for the organisation and it is important that elected members understand what we are doing and how they can help. |
| What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee? | | <p>To understand and support our activities to improve outcomes for looked after children.</p> <p>To engage in the dialogue about other measures which may help to improve outcomes for looked after children.</p> |

| Children's Services Scrutiny Committee | | |
|--|---------------|---|
| Portfolio | | Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning |
| Area for Scrutiny | | Early Intervention Strategy for the Borough |
| | | |
| Council Priorities | | |
| | Council Plan: | Keeping children and young people safe. Improving outcomes of all children and young people. |
| Context | | Children and young people in Dudley receive good services from the Council and its partners. Educational outcomes are generally in line with national averages. The proportion of children in the care of the Council is above the national average. |
| Rationale | | <p>If we can provide effective services earlier in the lives of children and young people and their families there may be numerous advantages; e.g. our education and care provision to children in their early years is already highly regarded. If it can be improved still further it will give more children a better start in life and improve their educational achievement throughout their school careers.</p> <p>Earlier identification of children in need, and effective action to support them and their families will enable us to promote their welfare more effectively.</p> <p>This latter point in particular may help to reduce the expenditure of the Council and keep more young people safe without the need to intervene in their upbringing.</p> |
| What are we asking from the Scrutiny Committee? | | <p>To understand and support our activities to promote early intervention.</p> <p>To engage in the dialogue about other measures which may make our early intervention work even more effective.</p> |

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 13th June, 2013

Report of the Director of Corporate Resources

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the four-month period commencing 1st June, 2013, and make any recommendations as to items to be scrutinized to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Background

2. The Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution include a requirement for a Forward Plan to be prepared by the Leader covering a period of four months.
3. Attached as an Appendix is the Forward Plan covering the four-month period from 1st June, 2013. The Forward Plan sets out information on key decisions that are likely to be taken by the Council, Cabinet, a Cabinet Member or Chief Officers in the period covered by the Plan.
4. The Forward Plan is available on the Internet via the Committee Management Information System (CMIS).
5. The Forward Plan is reported to all ordinary meetings of the Cabinet and will also be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in future. Increasing accessibility to the Forward Plan will assist the process of overview and scrutiny of key decisions.
6. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting held on 29th May, 2013 considered the Forward Plan and agreed that it be referred to the Council's five Scrutiny Committees with a request that they inform the Board of any items that they would wish to scrutinise so that further consideration can be given to this matter by the Board at a future meeting.

Finance

7. The financial implications associated with individual key decisions will be included in reports submitted on each individual item.
8. A key decision is defined as an executive decision which is likely:-

- (a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure, or the making of savings, which are £250,000 or more (revenue or capital); or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in one or more wards in the Borough.

Law

9 The requirement to produce a forward plan is set out under the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution.


10. The Constitution is adopted by the Council pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.

Equality Impact

11. The equality impact of specific key decisions will be referred to in individual reports on the items concerned.

Recommendation

12. That consideration be given to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions with a view to making any recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as to items to be scrutinised.



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Director of Corporate Resources

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List of Background Papers

The Constitution

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Decisions due to be made during the four month period from 01 Jun 2013

| Decision No Directorate | Project Name | Key Decision | Decision Period Meeting Date | Reports, Appendices & Background Papers | Consultation Details | Decision Taker | Contact Name |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|--|
| 0506 Corporate Resources | Localism Act 2011 | To consider the ongoing implications of the Localism Act 2011 on the governance arrangements adopted by Dudley MBC. | March 2013 - October 2013 | Localism Act 2011 and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State | Cabinet Members, The Audit and Standards Committee, other Committees depending on the implications of the Act; any other consultation as may be required by the legislation. | Cabinet; Full Council | Philip Tart Director of Corporate Resources (Phone: 01384 815300) |
| 0546 Urban Environment | Publication of the Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule | To approve the Publication of the Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule for statutory public consultation and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. | Cabinet September 2013 | Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule | Key internal officers and Cabinet Member for Regeneration. Draft document will be available to view prior to the Cabinet meeting. | Cabinet | Annette Roberts Directorate of the Urban Environment (Phone: 01384 - 814172) |
| 0551 Corporate Resources | Localised Council Tax Rebate Scheme | Adoption of our local scheme to replace the current national council tax benefit scheme alongside a 10% reduction in expenditure. | June 2013 | Local Government Finance Bill and any associated secondary legislation; and guidance issued | Key internal stakeholders (elected members, directorates, business units, etc), major preceptors, the public, the voluntary sector, other interested parties. | Cabinet; Full Council | Mike Williams Assistant Director, Corporate Resources (Phone: 4970) |
| 0574 Corporate Resources | Acceptance of Tenders or Quotations | Agreement, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to accept Tenders or Quotations for the Supply of Goods, Provision of Services or Works (or the Disposal of Goods) with a value in excess of £250,000 per annum - following a procurement exercise by the Directorate of Corporate Resources (Procurement, Contract Management and Credit Services Division). Decisions will be taken throughout the year in accordance with tendering programme. Items will be considered in private session to avoid the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority). | April 2013 - March 2014 | Summary of Tender Evaluation Report by Head of Procurement; Associated documents and reports prepared by Head of Procurement; | Key stakeholders (directorates, business units, schools etc) participating within the resulting contract are included in the tendering/evaluation processes. Appropriate Legal and Financial advice is also taken. The Director of Corporate Resources is required to consult the Cabinet Member for Finance on proposed contract awards - this occurs through correspondence and discussion as required. Contracts of this value are tendered and awarded in accordance with EU Procurement Directives which | Philip Tart | Philip Tart Director of Corporate Resources (Phone: 01384 815300) |

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Decisions due to be made during the four month period from 01 Jun 2013

| Decision No Directorate | Project Name | Key Decision | Decision Period Meeting Date | Reports, Appendices & Background Papers | Consultation Details | Decision Taker | Contact Name |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|--|
| | | | | | require advance publication of proposed contracts and the outcome of the tender exercise following a contract award. | | |
| 0575 Corporate Resources | Monitoring and Review of Capital and Revenue Expenditure or Income | To consider issues which have a significant impact upon the Capital or Revenue Expenditure and/or Income of the Council including those issues arising from the monitoring, review and implementation of the approved Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. [This is a standing item at each Cabinet meeting and the Decision Taker will be the Cabinet and then the Council, or individual members/officers in accordance with relevant delegations]. | April 2013 - March 2014 | Periodic and ad-hoc reports | Consultation appropriate to individual proposals. | Cabinet; Full Council | John Everson Technical Accountant, Corporate Resources (Phone: 01384-814806) |
| 0576 Corporate Resources | Spending Projections 2013/14 | To report details of the projected outturn for 2013/14 and to recommend amendments to the revenue budget, funded from General Balances if necessary. | April 2013 - March 2014 | Report of the Treasurer | Council Directors | Cabinet; Full Council | Iain Newman Treasurer (Phone: 01384-814802) |
| 0577 Corporate Resources | Waiver of Contract Standing Orders | Waiver of Contract Standing Orders by the Cabinet Member for Finance in appropriate circumstances. Items will be considered in private session to avoid the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority). | April 2013 - March 2014 | Returned tender documents/Council's Standing Orders; Records; maintained by the Chief Executive; Reports/correspondence by the; Director of Corporate Resources | The Scheme of Delegation requires the Cabinet Member for Finance to consult the Treasurer. Where appropriate Stakeholders with an interest in the contract(s) will also be consulted as part of the contract evaluation exercise. | Cllr Peter Lowe | Iain Newman Treasurer (Phone: 01384-814802) |
| 0578 Urban Environment | Dudley Local Enterprise Zone (LEZ) | To approve the management plan for the Dudley LEZ scheme. | Cabinet September 2013 | Cabinet Report - Proposed Dudley Local Enterprise Zone - 14th March; 2012; Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership - Submission to DCLG; for a Black Country Enterprise Zone - August 2011 | Consultation with property owners will be undertaken in December 2012. Consultation has taken place with the Dudley Business Group on the 19th December, 2012. | Cabinet | Phil Coyne Assistant Director, Economic Regeneration & Transportation (Phone: 4004) |
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Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Decisions due to be made during the four month period from 01 Jun 2013

| Decision No Directorate | Project Name | Key Decision | Decision Period Meeting Date | Reports, Appendices & Background Papers | Consultation Details | Decision Taker | Contact Name |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|--|
| 0582 Adult, Comm & Hous.Services | Exceptions to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme (Special Cases) | Individual decisions may be made in regard to the housing applications of people with exceptional circumstances not catered for within the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme. Items will be considered in private session to avoid the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 2 of part 1 of schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972 relating to information likely to reveal the identity of an individual. | February 2013 - March 2014 | Individual reports; Lettings Policy | Individual cases are not consulted upon. The Council Housing Allocations scheme is subject to statutory consultation with registered providers and informal and formal consultation with other stakeholders. | Andrea Pope-Smith | Diane Channings Assistant Director of Housing (Housing Management) (Phone: 01384) 815063) |
| 0586 Corporate Resources | Revenue Budget Strategy 2014/15 | To consider the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2014/15 and future years. | June 2013 - February 2014 | Report(s) of the Chief Executive,; Treasurer and Director of Corporate Resources | Public consultation - possible use of Citizen's Panel and Internet. Consultation with representatives of the Non-Domestic Ratepayers. | Cabinet | Iain Newman Treasurer (Phone: 01384-814802) |
| 0587 Corporate Resources | Review of Housing Finance | To approve the revised Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2013/14 and updates to the 30 year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. To approve the amendments to the Public Sector Housing Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2017/18. | Cabinet June 2013 | | Corporate Board, Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services Senior Management Team. Corporate Resources (Finance). | Cabinet | Catherine Ludwig Housing Finance Manager, Directorate of Finance, ICT etc (Phone: 01384 815075) |
| 0591 Urban Environment | 20mph zone priorities | To consider the outcome of consultation into the process and to agree priorities for further investigation. | Cabinet June 2013 | Revised draft protocol for the selection of sites for 20mph zones | Detailed schemes would be subject to full public consultation in line with Council protocol for consultation as part of the ongoing programme development. | Cabinet | Martyn Holloway DUE |