

---

**Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Report of the Lead for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)**

**Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23**

**Purpose**

1. To consider the annual scrutiny report for 2022/23.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Committee receive and comment on the attached annual report.
3. That the Committee identify any items that need to be rolled-forward for inclusion in the draft Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2023/24.

**Background**

4. The Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, as set out in the Council's [Constitution](#), require that an annual overview and scrutiny report is submitted to the Council.
5. The Committee's annual report for 2022/23 is attached as an Appendix. Minutes and outcomes of all Scrutiny Committee meetings can be accessed online via the [Committee Management Information System](#). Subject to any amendments, the Annual Report will be presented to the Council on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2023.
6. The Council has recognised the importance of retaining an annual review and report process. This is to ensure that the arrangements continue to align themselves to the needs of the Council and that the scrutiny arrangements remain adaptable and flexible to changes in circumstances.

## **Draft Annual Scrutiny Programme 2023/24**

7. Work to develop the Annual Scrutiny Programme at this stage needs to allow for flexibility given any potential changes arising from the annual meeting of the Council. All Scrutiny Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs, Officers and others will be invited to contribute to the development of the Annual Scrutiny Programme.
8. The views of the Committee are invited on any items that need to be 'rolled forward' to the next municipal year or any items they would like to suggest for inclusion in the draft Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2023/24.
9. A meeting of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs has been scheduled to take place on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 to discuss the Annual Scrutiny Programme.

## **Finance**

10. The costs of operating the Council's scrutiny arrangements are being contained within existing budgetary allocations.

## **Law**

11. 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.
12. Scrutiny powers relating to health are included in the Health and Social Care Acts 2001 and 2012, and associated Regulations and statutory guidance. The Police and Justice Act 2006 gives the Council powers to scrutinise the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables local authorities to scrutinise other partners. Much of this legislation is consolidated in the Localism Act 2011.

## **Risk Management**

13. The Council's scrutiny and governance arrangements are contained in the Council's Constitution which will ensure that the Council considers any ongoing material risks as part of the Council's Risk Management Framework.

## **Equality Impact**

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

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

15. Overview and Scrutiny work is primarily administered within the resources available to the Democratic Services Team with support from Directorates and other Officers as required. Any proposals to develop the Council's overview and scrutiny functions have to be set in the context of the resources available and the organisational capacity to support scrutiny work.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

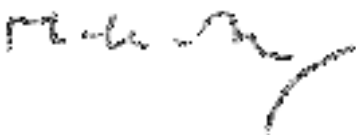
16. This report has no impact on the Council's potential to commercially trade. Individual items included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme may have commercial implications, which will be reported to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

## **Environment/Climate Change**

17. Individual items included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme and associated reports to Scrutiny Committees will consider any implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate Change and achieving Net Zero target by 2041.

## **Council Priorities and Projects**

18. Items within the Annual Scrutiny Programme and the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees contribute to the delivery of key Council priorities including the Borough Vision, Council Plan and Future Council Programme.



**Mohammed Farooq**  
**Lead for Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)**

Report Author: Kim Buckle  
Telephone: 01384 815242  
Email: [kim.buckle@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:kim.buckle@dudley.gov.uk)

## **Appendix**

Appendix 1 - Annual Report 2022/23

### **List of Background Documents**

[The Council's Constitution](#) – Article 6 and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules

Scrutiny Reports and Minutes available on the [Committee Management Information System](#)



**Chair -  
Councillor  
Paul Bradley**

## **Annual report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**2022/23 Municipal Year**



**Vice-Chair -  
Councillor  
Daniel Bevan**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters relating to Children's and Young People Services in the Directorate of Children's Services and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Re-Visit Update**

Throughout the Municipal Year Members considered reports on SEND as follows: -

On 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 a report was received on the findings from a recent SEND re-visit and next steps together with the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP). Appended to the report was the SEND revisit findings letter, the SEND APP and the SEND Improvement Programme Communications and Engagement Strategy.

On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 Members received a report on the current progress of the SEND APP, the SEND Operational Performance data and a School Inclusion update. The joint area SEND revisit in Dudley findings letter was appended to that report.

On 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 a verbal update was provided in relation to the Ofsted Inspection when improvements to services since 2021 were referred to and the overall judgment that although some services still required improvement the inspection was overall more positive in the detail.

#### ***Outcomes:***

- *The Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions was requested to provide details of the work undertaken in relation to Post 19 provision for young people with complex needs, once structures and co-produced work was implemented.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to submit the APP to a future meeting.*

## Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

Throughout the Year Members considered reports on key performance indicators within the Directorate of Children's Services and noted the Directorate's performance against those indicators.

### *Outcomes:*

- *There was a request that the Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions be requested to provide details of those areas within the Borough where Time for Two's placements were not being taken up for Members to promote placements in their Wards.*
- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to report on the further analysis assessing the outcomes for children supported by Families Come First and My Safety Plans.*

## Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

Members considered a report that had been emailed to them prior to the meeting and uploaded to the Council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) requesting Members to provide comments and questions prior to the meeting.

### *Outcome:*

- *The report was approved for publication in line with statutory requirements.*

## Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2021-2022

A report was submitted on the role and appointment of the Independent Children's Safeguarding Scrutineer detailing the work of the Partnership to engage with children and young people. The priorities for 2021/22 were considered by Members.

### *Outcomes:*

- *There was a request to advise Members of the number of children in care who had been placed out of Borough.*
- *The Service Director of Education, SEND and Family Solutions was requested to undertake a tracking exercise and advise*

- *Members of the number of those Post 16 entering the Youth Service who had experienced problems at school.*
- *A joint meeting of the Children and Young People and Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee and the Children's Corporate Parenting Board Working Group would be arranged to consider child poverty and obesity as soon as practicably possible.*

### **Integrated Early Years, Family Hubs and Start of Life in Dudley.**

A report was submitted to the November meeting of the Committee on the details of the progress of the Local Authority 's work on the development of the Integrated Early Years' Service Family Hubs and Start of Life.

#### **Outcomes:**

- *The delivery of the Integrated Early Years' Service following remodelling work to bring three distinct teams into a single leadership and management model was acknowledged.*
- *The delivery of the new Family Hubs and Start of Life programme in Dudley linked to grant conditions and funding over the financial years 2022 to 2023 and 2024 to 2025 was to be facilitated by Officers.*
- *There was a request that a visit to the Leapfrog Specialist Nursery Provision in Netherton be arranged.*

### **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2021/22**

Details of the Dudley Safeguarding Service statutory responsibility for overseeing and ratifying the care plans for children and young people in care via the activity of the IRO's was presented to Members. The service was also duty bound to provide the Committee with an annual report outlining the activity of the service, the impact for children and recommendations for service improvement that would enhance young people's experiences.

#### **Outcomes:**

- *The report would be utilised to inform strategic planning for the Dudley children and young people in care population.*
- *The report is to be used to hold the Safeguarding Service to account in the ongoing delivery of services to children and young people in care.*

## **Serious Violence Statutory Duty and Strategy**

The Committee received a report of the Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing providing information on the new statutory duty upon Local Authorities and other specified authorities in relation to serious violence and to report on the current activities to meet that duty. The Safer Dudley – Preventing and Reducing Serious Violence in Dudley Strategy for 2023 to 2026 was appended to the report.

### *Outcomes:*

- *It was requested that once developed Members be further consulted on the Serious Violence Strategy.*
- *The work of the Safe and Sound Board in undertaking their statutory duty around prevention of serious violence on behalf of the Local Authority was supported.*
- *The Head of Service Consultant in Public Health was requested to forward to Elected Members details of the support services available to tackle violence and serious crime.*

## **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

A joint report was submitted of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal, and the Director of Children's Services on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26, with the emphasis on those proposals relating to the Committee's terms of reference, specifically Children's Services.

### *Outcome:*

- *The Director of Finance and Legal Services was requested to: - investigate the possibility of offering a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to Foster Carers and provide Members with the detail surrounding the savings against the base budgeted for children's placements.*

## **Home to School Transport Policy**

Members considered a report on the Home to School Transport Policy. Appended to the report were the Consultation on the proposed changes to the Transport Policy for children and young people, the Home to School analysis and feedback, the aged four to sixteen proposed Transport Policy, the proposed Post sixteen Transport Statement, the Parent Carer Forum's Transport Consultation response, an email from a parent containing



comments on the aged four to sixteen new proposed Transport Assistance Policy and feedback from a parent on the proposed aged four to sixteen proposed new Transport Assistance Policy.

**Outcome:**

- *The Director of Children's Services was requested to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the new proposed Home to School Transport Policy.*

**Feedback from the Joint meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Working Group, the Health and Adult Social Care Services Scrutiny Committee Working Group and the Children's Corporate Parenting Board Working Group**

Members having considered the feedback report ratified the actions suggested by the joint Working Group as follows: -

**Outcomes:**

- *the short-term crisis interventions that the Council provide be noted, and that Public Health be tasked to research into good and innovative practises in other parts of the country, in respect of the long-term strategy to tackle the cycle of poverty embedded in parts of Dudley's Communities to assist with the development of the Dudley Strategy, and to report back to a future meeting of the joint working group.*
- *the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health provide a detailed Ward by Ward breakdown of the percentage of children living in poverty within the Dudley Borough.*
- *That a clear set of Key Performance Indicators and robust monitoring of the council's activities on poverty reduction be agreed as part of the Dudley strategy.*
- *That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health provide a list of the Schools in the Borough taking part in the National Breakfast Club Scheme and the companies schools work with to provide breakfast club supplies.*
- *That the Leadership of the Council be recommended to write to Central Government, as a matter of urgency, to request additional funding during the current cost of living crisis to assist families. It is acknowledged that the Government have to date made money available to assist families with fuel and food however as the crisis deepens, more families who would traditionally not have found themselves in relative poverty were now struggling. Demand on the voluntary sector was growing and resources were not keeping pace.*

- *That the Housing and Communities Directorate be reminded of their Corporate Parenting role and responsibilities and be a named and active key partner within the Dudley Strategy.*
- *That a report on the role and responsibilities of the Private Sector Housing Team; what powers of enforcement they have at their disposal and an understanding of how they put the child at the centre of the work they undertake, be submitted to a future meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee Working Group.*
- *That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health, pursue the arrangements of a meeting with the Department for Works and Pensions, to raise concerns of the impact of the change in benefit eligibility and to consider the possibility of sharing data and to notify a school when a child was eligible for free school meals.*
- *That a further report on ideas and initiatives Dudley could utilise to develop healthy High Streets and provide advice on whether fast-food delivery organisations require a special license to deliver food, be submitted to a future meeting of the joint Working Group.*
- *That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health, provide the joint Working Group Members with a copy of the delivery plan in relation to the Family Hub Funding.*
- *That the Head of Service – Children and Young Peoples Public Health, provide an update on the number of schools enrolled on the Apprenticeship Levy.*
- *That Public Health undertake research and benchmark with other Authorities in relation to the Car Free Streets Scheme and provide a report outlining the advantages and disadvantages to a future meeting of the Working Group.*
- *That a further report to review the data and progress made in relation to Mental Health needs and support for children and young people, be submitted to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee in 12 months and included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.*
- *That the Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing provide a briefing note on the services commissioned and provided by Cranstoun.*

## **Other Items Considered by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year**

### Scrutiny Committee

- Education Outcomes Update
- Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23
- Children's Services Improvement Plan Update
- Dudley Virtual School Annual Report

## Ongoing Items to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

Items that have been considered by the Committee but are incomplete requiring further scrutiny and inclusion in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2022/23 are listed below: -

- Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report
- Dudley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report
- Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report
- Integrated Early Years, Family Hubs and Start of Life in Dudley
- Serious Violence Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Education Report
- Dudley Virtual School Annual Report
- Social Care Improvement Updates

Items suggested for inclusion in the work programme for 2023/24: -

- Good and innovative practices in other parts of the country, in respect of the long-term strategy to tackle the cycle of poverty embedded in parts of Dudley's Communities to assist with the development of the Dudley Strategy, be reported to a future meeting of the joint working group should it be re-appointed.
- That a report be submitted on the role and responsibilities of the Private Sector Housing Team: what powers of enforcement they have at their disposal and an understanding of how they put the child at the centre of the work they undertake.
- That a further report on ideas and initiatives Dudley could utilise to develop healthy High Streets and provide advice on whether fast-food delivery organisations require a special license to deliver food, be submitted to a future meeting of the joint Working Group should it be re-appointed.
- That Public Health undertake research and benchmark with other Authorities in relation to the Car Free Streets Scheme and provide a report outlining the advantages and disadvantages to a future meeting of the Working Group should it be re-appointed.

- That a further report to review the data and progress made in relation to Mental Health needs and support for children and young people, be submitted to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee in 12 months and included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.