

8 October 2019

## Working group on Access and Inclusion

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolio** Councillor Chris Towe - Education & Skills

### Report:

At its meeting on 18 June 2019, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from officers on the proposed areas of focus for 2019/20 and discussed what were to be the Committee's main priorities for the municipal year. This facilitated the preparation of the Committee's work programme, which was approved at the meeting on 3 September 2019. Accordingly, the Committee agreed to establish a working group with a membership of Councillors Daniel Barker, Rose Burley, Sat Johal and Pard Kaur to conduct a review into the issues of access and inclusion in Walsall's primary, secondary and special schools.

The working group's first meeting was held on 26 September 2019 and Councillor Barker was elected to be the Chair of the group. The group proceeded to identify the following key areas for the review:

- The Local Authority's responsiveness to meeting the demands of schools and parents with reference to exclusions in Walsall.
- The effectiveness of the policies and procedures of schools and the Local Authority in relation to the issue of exclusions.
- Assessing the main reasons for the exclusion of children and young people from schools and the practice of 'off-rolling' being carried out in some schools in Walsall.

The working group's initiation document is attached at Appendix 1. This sets out objectives and scope, together with some of the people that the working group would wish to be involved in the review process. A proposed timetable and reporting schedule has also been included and the next meeting of the group is to be arranged. In view of the extent of the review, it is anticipated that the working group's report will be presented to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 March 2020.

### Recommendation:

To note the report and approve the initiation document of the working group on access and inclusion

### Contact Officer:

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## Walsall Council Overview &amp; Scrutiny Working Group: Initiation Document

<b>Work Group Name:</b>	Working group on Access and Inclusion
<b>Committee:</b>	Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>Municipal Year:</b>	2019/20
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Chris Towe
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Mrs Sharon Kelly, Assistant Director – Access & Achievement
<b>Support Officer:</b>	Dr Paul Fantom, Democratic Services Officer
<b>Membership:</b>	Councillor Dan Barker (Chair of the working group) Councillor Rose Burley Councillor Sat Johal Councillor Pard Kaur
<b>Co-opted Members:</b>	N/A

<b>1.</b>	<b>Context</b>
	<p>During the 2018/19 municipal year, the Education Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee established a working group on SEND, pupil exclusions and children not accessing education. Having been approved by the Committee on 26 March 2019, the group's report was presented to the Cabinet on 24 April 2019 and the findings and conclusions were noted and recommendations were endorsed for implementation, as appropriate.</p> <p>In establishing a working group for the 2019/20 municipal year, the Committee agreed that the principal area for review should be access and inclusion in relation to Walsall's primary, secondary and special schools. Therefore, this review will build on the foundations of the work that was undertaken by the above-mentioned previous working group, and will allow this group to conduct a detailed and in-depth examination. The working group's recommendations will be presented in due course.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
	<p>The working group has identified the following key areas for the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Authority's responsiveness to meeting the demands of schools and parents with reference to exclusions in Walsall.</li> <li>• The effectiveness of the policies and procedures of schools and the Local Authority in relation to the issues of exclusion.</li> <li>• Assessing the main reasons for the exclusion of children and young people from schools and the practice of 'off-rolling' being carried out in some schools in Walsall</li> </ul> <p>The working group propose to submit a report to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 20 March 2020.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Scope</b>
	<p>The working group has adopted the following approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who do you want to see?</li> <li>• When do you want to see them?</li> <li>• What will you ask them?</li> <li>• What other data will you want to see?</li> </ul>

	It is proposed that a minimum of four meetings of the group are arranged. For each meeting, the people or groups of people that the working group wish to meet with will be identified and invited to attend. A list of questions will be devised by the working group and other data/information required in advance of the meetings will be specified so that it can be supplied by the Children's Services Directorate/other agencies.		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Equalities Implications</b>		
	The working group will ensure that its recommendations will take into account the different strands of equality and ensure that no group is disadvantaged.		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Who else will you want to take part?</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Director - Access &amp; Achievement</li> <li>• Strategic Improvement Lead - SEND</li> <li>• Service Manager - Admissions and Pupil Place Planning</li> <li>• Head teachers from Walsall primary, secondary and special schools</li> <li>• Groups representing parents and children and young people</li> <li>• Others (to be determined by the working group)</li> </ul>		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Timescales &amp; Reporting Schedule</b>		
	<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
	26 September 2019	Terms of reference	Working group
	8 October 2019	Agree terms of reference	Committee
	TBC – October 2019	Consider data/information to be provided by Children's Services Directorate to provide context and assist with formulating questions	Working group
	TBC November 2019	Interviews	Working group
	TBC January 2020	Interviews	Working group
	TBC February 2020	Interviews/wrap-up	Working group
	20 March 2020	Present final report	Committee
<b>7.</b>	<b>Risk factors</b>		
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Measure to Resolve</b>
	Being unable to cover all identified themes within available time	High	Organise a schedule of meetings to plan ahead where possible
	Officer time available to support the working group may limit its ability to deliver the outcomes desired	High	One meeting of the working group to deal with each issue/group.
	Interviewees may feel intimidated by formal committee setting	High	Minimise by interviewing some participants in groups, rather than individually
<div> Date Agreed: </div> <div> Date Updated: </div>			