

10 March 2020

Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Portfolios: All

Wards: All

1. Summary of report

This report provides a short summary of the activity of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

2. Recommendation

That, subject to any comments Members may wish to make, the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.

3. Report

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered an item on child exploitation, including the issues relating to child exploitation (sexual and criminal). A wide range of partners attended the meeting, including Street Teams, the Police, Walsall CCG, the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Children's Board and Walsall Healthcare Trust. Partners described the work that took place to tackle child exploitation. Members considered actions taken by all organisations in relation to child exploitation, and challenged how well the partnership was working together. The Committee heard that local business cooperated well with the partnership in order to identify and disrupt child exploitation. It was noted that in order to meet key priorities the pace of work by the partnership needed to be increased.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 20 February 2020:

SPRINT A34 Walsall to Birmingham

The Committee received a presentation from Transportation Major Projects and Strategy Manager and Director of Customer Experience at Transport for West Midlands on SPRINT about Vision for Bus and SPRINT.

The Committee were informed of the following topics:

The Metropolitan Authorities' Vision for Transport.
Timetable of objections and opportunities such as regional wide Bus Fleet (EURO VI) by 2021.

One system, one brand – West Midlands Bus, Metro and Railway under a single brand.

Bus Services Act 2017 – Bus Delivery Options for future.

Swift Payments

A discussion ensued about SPRINT proposals A34 Walsall to Birmingham. A Member circulated WMCA Board papers which outlined at the WMCA Board had approved the final business case for proposals on A34.

Council Fireworks and Bonfire Displays

The Committee received a report on Council fireworks and bonfire displays from the Senior Programme Development and Commissioning Manager and PHP Service Development Manager in Public Health.

It was noted that for at least 15 years, the Council had operated bonfire and firework displays across the Borough. As the years progressed, fireworks had become more powerful and prices rose significantly between £8,000 and £10,000.

Since 2016, the Council ran displays at a reported loss. As a result, the Council undertook a restructure and development the Healthy Spaces Team under Public Health which was created from mergers from Sport and Leisure Development and Environmental Improvement.

A debate ensued about the reported losses from four events across the Borough between 2017 and 2019. As a result, the Chair determined that officers had insufficient information to answer questions from Members of the Committee and were unable to alleviate their concerns. It was requested that the report be presented at the next meeting of the Committee on 9 April 2020 with the relevant Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers invited.

Unauthorised Encampments Working Group – Final Report

Members considered the UE Working Group final report and debated the issue of negotiated stopping. The report was welcomed by Members of the Gypsy Liaison Group and Portfolio Holders as a proactive approach which identifies a long-term strategy for Members of the GRT Communities.

During the debate on negotiated stopping, the Committee resolved to make the following final addition to the recommendations:

That, the Council's approach on negotiated stopping be commended.

The Working Groups report was referred to Cabinet.

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 13 February and considered the following items:

1. Update on Jane Lane Special School

- Update on steps taken regarding standards and improvement for school that was placed in special measures.
 - A report back to Committee will be made in September 2020.
2. Steps to address performance in schools rated inadequate and/or requiring improvement by Ofsted
 - Outline of processes and procedures to address performance issues in schools.
 - Discussion of Team Around the School rapid recovery plan and of Schools causing concern guidance document issued by DfE in September 2019.
 3. SEND joint commissioning
 - Report on commissioning of services for children with SEND to meet requirements of their Education Health and Care Plans.
 - Discussion of commissioning arrangements with schools and NHS agencies and types of commissioning currently undertaken.
 4. Walsall Right 4 Children transformation update
 - Update on transformation programme that commenced on 18/09/2018 and progress made since.
 - Report on performance framework, recent inspections and feedback received from children and parents.
 5. Post-16 provision in Walsall
 - Update on post-16 provision in Borough, including information, advice and guidance (IAG) services.
 - Discussion of attainment in post-16 sector by Walsall children and young people.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee received an item providing an update on the development of 7 Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in Walsall, two GP Clinical Leads for PCNs attended the Committee to talk to Members. The challenges that faced primary care were discussed and acknowledged - Members were asked for support in advocating for 'social services' to be retained to mitigate the impact on primary care. Funding would be made available to PCNs for additional posts to reduce pressure on GP appointments. Members were invited to attend a PCN meeting in the future and the Committee agreed to receive an update on PCNs in 6 months.

Access to Community Dental Services was also discussed by the Committee, who heard proposals to reduce the number of locations providing community dental services from five locations to one. The benefits of this include increased effectiveness and efficiencies, a better use of resources, a better equipped surgery with investment and a more enhanced service with opportunities to expand in the future. These were presented and considered by the Committee. The Committee made the following recommendations that Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust reconsidered the following prior to making a decision on the proposed changes to the service;

That:

1. Journey times were revisited to ensure that the site is assessable for the patients,
2. The EQIA is revised to ensure that any negative impacts are acknowledged,
3. More service users are engaged with to seek their views, to include questionnaires posted to people,
4. The Trust should be satisfied that parking is adequate for increased number of service users,
5. The service should be promoted to ensure that service users access it as a preventative measure.

The Committee concluded that they would monitor the impact of the service changes in the future.

Authors:

Craig Goodall
Senior Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01922 654765
✉ Craig.Goodall@walsall.gov.uk

Paul Fantom
Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01922 653484
✉ Paul.Fantom@walsall.gov.uk

Nikki Gough
Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01922 654767
✉ Nikki.Gough@walsall.gov.uk

Matt Powis
Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01922 654764
✉ Matthew.Powis@walsall.gov.uk