

1 December 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 Children's Services Scrutiny Committee considered the quarter 2 financial monitoring position and the Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21 – 2023/24. As part of this item Members received draft budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, resolving to note this item.

The Committee were given an update on the progress against the Walsall Right for Children transformation programme and the plans for development over the next 3 years.

Members approved the Youth Justice Working Group report and agreed that it should be forwarded to Cabinet for their consideration. Finally the Committee received, as an overview item, a briefing on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's routine health assessments.

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting in September 2019, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an update on Jane Lane School, a College for Cognition and Learning. The report explained the steps that have been taken to address the issues identified in the Ofsted report on the School presented earlier in the year and the processes being followed by the School and the Authority. Feedback was also received from the School's Interim Executive Board on the improvements made and their impact on the children and families. The meeting also looked at Teacher supply and recruitment with Members learning about the the steps being taken to increase the recruitment

of teachers to schools in Walsall, including newly qualified teachers (NQTs). As well as the steps being taken to retain those teachers already recruited, including recently qualified teachers (RQTs).

In October 2019 the Committee focussed on the SEND Local Area Improvement Programme to understand the improvement programme established in response to the local area inspection that had been carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. This included the production of the Authority's Written Statement of Action to address the nine areas of concern identified during the inspection and the timescales involved. Members also heard about Education, Health and Care Plans and were provided with an overview of the actions and progress being made to ensure the meeting of the requirements for EHCPs by the Authority. Other issues raised included funding considerations, the restructuring of the Access & Achievement division of Children's Services and the introduction of new online resources to assist with the processing of EHCP applications. An update on the Right for Children Transformation Programme was provided explaining the latest phase of the transformation programme and the activities associated with it. It was explained how feedback from children and families, developing an evidence-based locality offer and the realignment of Children's Services resources to the localities was taking place.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 19 November. The Committee considered a petition on road safety measures at Doe Bank Lane. Councillor Andrew was the lead petitioner along with Cheryl Bullock presented their reasons for the petition and requested the Council to implement road safety measures. The Committee debated and recommended that additional signage be provided and that further engineering work be considered.

The Committee considered the draft revenue budget for 2021, 2022 and 2023, 2024. Following a lengthy debate, Members sought clarification on a number of savings identified in the budget and were provided responses from the Executive Director of Economy and Environment.

The Committee considered a report on Council firework and bonfire displays. Members debated and commented on the preparation for future Council firework and bonfire displays.

The Committee considered a report on cycling in Walsall. It was noted that the Government had published new funding for Local Authorities to provide new and upgrade existing cycling routes. Members debated issues with cycling routes in their wards and how to improve cycling provision in future.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee is scheduled to meet on 26 November 2020. Items on the agenda include:

- Draft revenue budget
- COVID-19 Action and Combined Winter Plan

A verbal update on the meeting will be provided at SOC on 1 December 2020.

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