

15 April 2021

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 met on 15th March and received a partnership update on exploitation including issues relating to child exploitation including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and criminal exploitation; including children involved in the supply of drugs "county lines". Partners in attendance included the Police, Street Teams, Mental Health, Independent Safeguarding Chair, Walsall Health Care Trust, and the Violence Reduction Unit. The Committee also received the Walsall Safeguarding Annual Report, which provided assurance that partnership activity was effective in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people. Finally, Members received a report on the Black Country Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDAC) Programme, this is an alternative approach to working with families to support them to keep their children within their care and is part of the Walsall Right for Children Transformation Programme.

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 11 March 2021 and received and noted a report that provided an update on Covid 19 guidance for schools (including testing), attendance and opening of schools, remote learning and digital devices, and data on Covid cases in schools. The Committee was also advised on developments since the report was written, including testing arrangements for pupils, families and teaching staff, return to school arrangements and attendance rates.

The Committee received and noted the activity in place and the progress made to date to address the 6 recommendations of the Access and Inclusions Working Group's report. The Committee noted the responses in respect of the recommendations regarding the Authority's local offer to schools, the rolling out of training to schools, the adoption of the Fair Access Protocol by head teachers, but was especially pleased to note that the backlog of EHCPs had been cleared.

The Committee received and noted the report, which summarised the role of the School Organisation Service, provided an update on pupil place planning for primary and secondary education in Walsall, and provided background information in capital funding and school expansion schemes. The Committee noted the steps being taken to ensure that the number of pupil places is viable and sustainable, whilst supporting and challenging schools to make sure that they are delivering, and whilst accounting for the local and national trends regarding the size of the school population.

The Committee received and noted a report on the Council's strategy for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which set out its vision, principles and the provision of integrated services across education, health and social care work. The Committee noted the emphasis on supporting early intervention and prevention, to allow support to be given in a timely manner and ensuring that the needs of children and young people are met, and by working with them and their families, parents and carers to achieve this.

The Committee received and noted a progress report on the WR4C Transformation Programme and plans for further development over the next 3 years in line with the PROUD programme transformation benefits. The Committee noted the 3 strategic priorities of reducing demand, developing a highly skilled/stable workforce, and co-ordinating and influencing the establishment of a mature WR4C partnership platform to drive the delivery of the WR4C vision.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered a petition in regards to traffic management proposals on Barns Lane, Rushall. The Lead Petitioner addressed the Committee informing the Committee of the history of road incidents on Barns Lane and the lack of progressed made on speed enforcement.

Members debated the petition and asked numerous questions on previous actions taken by the Council to improve Barns Lane. There were concerns from Members on the lack of Police engagement with speed enforcement in Walsall.

The Committee agreed several recommendations including the installation of dragon teeth gateway, additional signage and engineering works and a review of traffic calming measures. Members also wished to invite the Police to a future meeting to discuss speed enforcement in the borough.

The Committee considered a presentation from Sarah Middleton, Chief Executive of the Black Country Consortium. The Committee considered an update on the membership of the LEP Board, structure, current risks in the BC and Walsall Economy and update on investment.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee is scheduled to meet on 8 April 2021. Items on the agenda include:

- Walsall Together Update
- Community Stroke rehabilitation
- Diabetic Eye Screening Procurement

A verbal update on the meeting will be provided at the meeting.

Authors:

Craig Goodall
Principal 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