

12 March 2019

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

At its meeting on 28th January the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on knife crime and criminal exploitation. The Committee received a presentation from Walsall Council and the Police who described the issue in Walsall and the multi-agency response. An item on Social Worker recruitment and retention was considered and Members were reassured by progress that had been made. In addition the Committee received a briefing on the most recent Ofsted focused visit (care leavers).

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 14 February 2019:

- Corporate financial performance – Q3 financial monitoring position for 2018/19
 - Report on forecast overspend for services relating to portfolio
 - Report and actions being taken to address the overspend were noted
- School admissions process
 - Report provided information on school admissions process, Council's statutory responsibilities in this regard, co-ordination with neighbouring local authorities and support provided to parents by the Admissions Team
 - Noted that following on from January meeting, a letter from the Chair had been sent to the LGA raising the Committee's concerns about the impact of the process and the difficulties experienced by some parents in obtaining a place for their child/children at their

school of choice (especially in the case of mid-year applications when circumstances have changed, e.g. parents have moved house, etc.)

- Discussion of school admission appeals process
- Information, Advice and Guidance
 - Report on the provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) services in Walsall, giving an overview of the services, the challenges they face and the issues being dealt with
 - Noted that most IAG services provided in secondary schools and that most of secondary schools in Walsall are now academies
 - Discussion of current arrangements, including working with Walsall Association of Careers Professionals and the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC)
 - Noted that through its new framework arrangements, Ofsted looking more closely at IAG for children aged 12-18 years

In addition, brief statements were made by officers/Chair/Portfolio Holder regarding:

- 1) Jane Lane School – Brief explanation of why the school was closed and arrangements for re-opening. Full report to be made to next meeting, 26/03/19
- 2) Home to school transport for service users post-16 years of age
 - Confirmation of Cabinet Decision on 13/02/19 to not proceed with this budget saving in 2019/20.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting on 19 February 2019 the committee consider the final report of the Selective Licensing and Private Rented Sector Working Group. The Working Group investigation had highlighted the growth of housing in the private rented sector in recent years. Housing in this sector now made up approximately 15,000 properties. The investigation been wide ranging and considered the current approach in the Walsall, views of local and national landlords as well approaches by other countries and local authorities. The Working Group made a series of recommendations, including, amongst others, the introduction of selective licensing, changes to the definitions of HMOs and increased resources to tackle local rogue landlords. The Committee approved the report and it will be debated at a future Council meeting.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The main theme of the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26th February was 'Women's Health'. Under this theme 'period poverty' was considered where representatives of the charity 'period power' attended to discuss their aims and ambitions. The Screening Lead from NHS England attended the Committee to present on cancer screening and inform the committee of screening programmes in Walsall for breast and cervical cancer. Also considered was a presentation on domestic violence and the current provision of services in Walsall. In addition to this the Dudley and Walsall

Mental Health Trust attended along with the Black Country Partnership Trust to describe a merger between the two organisations.

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