

27 September 2018

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 OSC met on 26th June and considered the following items:

- Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protections, children looked after and care leavers. The Committee received the progress of the improvement plan and its 12 associated recommendations. The Committee subsequently agreed to establish a working group to consider recommendations 7 and 9.
- Quarter 4 finance report. Members considered the financial performance for the financial year 2017/18 and sought reassurance that there were plans to mitigate the financial overspends reported.
- Areas of focus 2018/19. The following work programme items were agreed:-
 - Children's Services Performance Scorecard Demand Management and Looked After Children
 - Exploitation (to include missing children)
 - Children's Services Transformation programme
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health
 - Statutory reports – annual complaints report, report of Corporate Parenting Board, report of Walsall Safeguarding Children Board.
 - Member reports on visits to children's homes, new belongings and council4kids.
 - Youth Justice
 - Financial Monitoring

- Ofsted Working Group on recommendations 7 and 9.

The Committee is due to meet on 25th September to consider the following items:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Right for Children Transformation programme
- Children's Services Performance 2017-18 Out-turn and Performance Framework

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its most recent meeting:

1. SEND in Walsall

- Members received a report of a review of the Council's preparedness to test out the effectiveness of SEND practice prior to the forthcoming Ofsted inspection.
- The review was conducted over a two-month period and identified a number of strengths as well as areas for development.
- An action plan was included in the report, with recommendations placed under 5 broad headings:
 - Strategy and vision
 - Systems and structure
 - Support for families
 - Meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people
 - Effective partnership working and commissioning
- Members received a presentation summarising the background to the report, its findings and the action plan.
- Members resolved to:
 - Establish a working group to support the implementation of the action plan
 - Monitor the effectiveness of the actions implemented on an annual basis

2. New Leaf Inclusion Centre

- Members received a report summarising the key findings from Ofsted's inspection of the Centre on 18/19 April 2018, the report of which had graded the centre as 'inadequate' in all areas.
- Members resolved to:
 - Note the report and the progress being taken to address the inadequacies identified by Ofsted.
 - Request that a progress report be submitted to the January 2019 meeting.

3. Work Programme

- Members received and approved the work programme for the year.
- Members approved the establishment of three working groups for the year:
 - SEND in Walsall (also including pupil exclusions and children not accessing education)

- Autism/outreach
- Out-of-Borough schooling

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At the first meeting of Economy and Environment, the Committee considered a petition on the reinstatement of Brownhills Market. During this item a wider debate ensued which discussed the wider aspects of Walsall Market's Plan and recommended that a Market's Working Group be established to look at wider retail offer in Walsall.

In addition, the Committee were informed about the standards of the private rented housing sector and selective licensing in Walsall. A discussion commenced and the following points were outlined:-

- Four areas in Walsall had been selected for consultation on proposals for Selective Licensing;
- The Council had seen reductions in Housing Standards Enforcement Officers and Members raised concerns at the number of properties in Walsall failing to meet adequate housing standards which had been reiterated in the inquiry's findings;
- The Council encouraged dialogue between landlords and tenants to improve housing standards;
- Members expressed concerns that tenants fail to report inadequate housing standards for fear of eviction and other retaliatory measures;
- It was reported that a number of landlords were not aware of their statutory responsibilities when renting out properties;
- Wolverhampton City Council's Selective Licensing Scheme had been successful and had a positive effect;
- Concerns were raised over the lack of available social housing in Walsall;
- Enforcement with noncompliant landlords was deemed to be inconsistent;
- It was reported that there was no evidence to suggest that Selective Licensing Schemes increase rental house prices;
- A private rented sector housing and selective licensing working group would enable further investigation into issues faced by tenants and landlords in Walsall.
- A Member requested that representatives from both Children's Services and Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee be represented on the working group, which was agreed by the Committee.

The Committee recommended that a working group be established to review the standards of private rented sector housing in Walsall and to establish best practice from other areas of the country.

The Committee approved areas of focus for 2018/19 which included the following:-

Air Quality and Air Pollution;
Transportation Links in the Borough;
Employment, Growth and Skills

September 2018

The Committee received a presentation from Walsall Council's Building Control which provided an overview of the service and to develop a better understanding of the relationship between building control and local authority building control.

Members agreed for further information to be circulated to all Members of the Council to advertise the work of building control and encourage further uptake. In addition, the Committee considered a report on air pollution and air quality in Walsall which provided an overview and current challenges of addressing air quality standards and pollution in Walsall. Members noted an update on the Clean Air Zone implementation proposals for Birmingham and as well as overall transportation projects in Walsall.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At the first meeting held on 28th June the Chair set out a thematic approach to the work programme. The themes agreed for the municipal year were: -

- Welfare Assistance,
- Hospital Services and Community Care,
- Partnership Working (Health and Social Care Integration),
- Voluntary Sector and Capacity Building,
- Finance (Investment, Better Care Fund and Health Service)
- Mental Health – to include a visit into the community,
- Young People and Social Care to be considered by a working group.

At its first meeting the Committee also considered the following items: -

- Place Based Commission of the Walsall Together Alliance . The Committee heard that through the Walsall Together Provider Board worked in partnership to deliver outcomes through contracts with the CCG and Local Authority. Alternative commissioning models and provision were being assessed to identify the most appropriate model for the local health economy.
- Adult Social Care. This set out the latest activity data and the financial position for the Adult Social Care directorate.
- Urgent Care Offer in Walsall which detailed the proposal to relocate the walk in centre to Walsall Healthcare Trust. Discussion included challenge from Members around primary care appointments in Walsall.

The theme of the second meeting held on 13th September was Hospital Services and Community Care. This item described the sustainability plan for hospital and physical community health care in the Black Country. Following discussion by the Committee, Members were keen to consider the hospital priorities in relation to each service plan once it was publically available. The Committee also heard that the plans to relocate the Urgent

Care Centre to Walsall Healthcare Trust would be delayed until winter pressures had eased.

Review papers were presented on the

- Black Country Transforming Care Programme. The item described plans to discharge people from institutional care into the community to ensure a better standard of living for individuals.
- Stroke services. The successful redesign of the stroke service was described and the Committee were assured that this was a better service than previously provided.
- Outpatients Service Improvements at Walsall Healthcare Trust. The Committee were provided with reassurance that good progress had been made and that this should continue to improve.

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