

4 February 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 Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board presented the Annual Report to the Committee and agreed to challenge the partnership on the outcomes for children and young people in Walsall at a future meeting. The Committee also held an interactive session on data, which included key benchmarking data and current performance for the service. The session allowed Members to understand how data was used, strengths and weaknesses of this along with the importance of correct recording.

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting in 9 January 2020 the Committee considered:

- Schools funding
 - Update on the financial system that schools and the local authority operate within in relation to education funding, i.e.
 - (i) the 4 blocks of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)
 - (ii) Central School Services Block (CSSB) that supports the statutory services that are required to be provided in all schools.
- School and pupil place planning
 - Overview and update detailing the division of the Borough into planning areas for primary and secondary schools for the purpose of school organisation and pupil place planning
 - Projections for primary and secondary schools for 2020/21 to 2023/24
 - Committee requested a further briefing on the schools admission arrangements, to be provided at a future or special meeting of the Committee.

- Update on the SEND Local Area Improvement Programme and on EHCPs
- Update on the progress being made in relation to the programme, the Written Statement of Action and the improvements made in the processing of Education, Health and Care Plans
- Actions being submitted to the Local Area Improvement Board (LAIB)
- Steps being taken to address the processing of EHCPs, the backlog and the statutory requirements and timescales involved.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 14 January 2020:

M6 Junction 10

The Committee received a presentation from Highways England and SISK Contractor for the works.

During this discussion, Members discussed an overview of the project, timescales and the role of local roads during the works.

Members expressed concerns about the issues around suicide prevention which Highways England was working with the Council to improve signage via the Charity Samaritans and the increases in litter around Junction 10 and request further information on whether there would be a maintenance programme for the area.

Section 106 Funding

Members were guided through the Section 106 Funding process and were given an overview of historically agreed monies from developers.

It was noted that with effect from 1 September 2019, the following changes were introduced:

Removal of pooling restrictions from 106 funding

With the removal of this requirement, local planning authorities would be able to collect more than five contributions to fund the same infrastructure by using 106 agreements.

Limits of Monitoring Fees

There was an added requirements to restrict monitoring fees and subject to a reasonableness test relevant to the scale and type of development.

There were concerns about the lack of consultation with Elected Members about Section 106 Funding.

Areas of Focus

The Committee agreed to receive an item from Transport for West Midlands on SPRINT and commence a Driving Culture and Air Pollution Working Group.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee invited Walsall Health Care Trust to attend the meeting and present reports on the Walsall Together programme, and stroke service rehabilitation. As part of the stroke services item, the Committee received an update from Walsall Healthcare Trust on the service reconfiguration and to detail the future plans for the service, which was for the stroke rehabilitation service to be located at Holly Bank House. The Committee heard from a Member of the Public on her negative experience of the service which prompted the Committee to request a further item on clinical outcomes for stroke services to be considered at the next meeting. Under the Walsall Together item, Members heard that the programme had made significant progress and consensus of all partners.

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