

## **SCRUTINY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**14 JULY 2016 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE**

### **Panel Members Present**

Councillor K. Hussain (Chair)  
Councillor J. Murray (Vice Chair)  
Councillor D. Barker  
Councillor K. Chambers  
Councillor C. Creaney  
Councillor A. Ditta  
Councillor M. Longhi  
Councillor C. Towe  
Councillor S. Wade

### **Officers Present:**

David Haley -	Director (Children's Services)
Neil Picken –	Senior Democratic Services Officer

### **Leader of the Council**

Councillor S. Coughlan

### **36/16 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor M. Bird and E. Hazell.

### **37/16 SUBSTITUTIONS**

None.

### **38/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

### **39/16 MINUTES**

Members considered the minutes of the meetings held on 17 March, 2016.

### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March, 2016, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

The Chair invited each of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs to provide feedback on the recent round of meetings.

### **Education and Children's Services**

Members were advised that the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2016 to consider its remit for the year ahead. Members were referred to the list of items as detailed within the appendix of the report which included a wide range of matters from 'protecting vulnerable groups from child sexual exploitation and radicalisation' to 'getting children school ready and the role of parents'.

The Chair of the Education and Children's Services Committee confirmed his commitment to ensure that a broad range of matters including education and social care/safeguarding matters would be considered. He referred to the recent open letter from the Head of Ofsted in the West Midlands, Lorna Fitzjohn, which recognised the challenges faced within the Black Country. He explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would hold the Chair of the Education Challenge Board to account throughout the year.

In relation to budgets, the Committee were advised that Children's Services remains under considerable financial pressure in continuing times of austerity. The Committee intended to develop an understanding of those areas of the service which lead to overspends and identify possible initiatives to ease the pressures faced.

In terms of working groups, two had been established to investigate Child Poverty and Child Mental Health. Members were supportive that Mental Health matters were being reviewed.

It was highlighted that Members of the Committee will be undertaking visits to the Boroughs children's homes. This would ensure that members meet the children and young people and see first-hand the services being provided.

In closing, it was confirmed that the agenda for the September meeting had been agreed and would focus on finance, young carers in education and the councils self assessment of services ahead of an Ofsted Inspection.

### **Social Care and Health**

Members were advised that the work programme for the Committee was busy. Special meetings would have to be established to ensure that important matters could be considered. Of particular concern was the poor rating given to Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group and the fact that the Hospital was in Special Measures.

A special meeting had been agreed to take place in July, 2016 to consider an update from:-

- Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group
- Walsall Healthcare Trust in relation to the recovery plan.

The Chair confirmed that the committee would continue to work positively with all Partners to ensure that effective scrutiny could take place.

In closing, the Chair explained that Trusts could undertake work differently but that this required a change which they appeared reluctant to undertake.

### **Corporate and Public Services**

Members were advised that the Committee had established a Remembrance Day Parade Working Group which would include representatives from the Royal British Legion, the Police and officers of the Council. The Terms of Reference would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

At the next meeting the Committee had agreed to consider:-

- Alternate weekly collections;
- Network Rail electrification scheme;
- Willenhall Post Office
- A petition entitled 'Save Walsall Jobs'

### **Resolved:**

**That the updates be noted.**

### **41/16 AREAS OF FOCUS 2015/16**

Members considered the areas of focus for each of the Scrutiny Committees.

### **Resolved:**

That the areas of focus be noted.

### **42/16 FORWARD PLANS**

Members considered the forward plan of key decisions from Cabinet and the Black Country Joint Executive (annexed).

### **Resolved:**

That the Forward Plans be noted.

43/16      **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was 13 October, 2016.

The meeting terminated at 7.05 p.m.

Chair: .....

Date:.....