

25 November 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 the September Committee meeting Members considered the Youth Justice Improvement Plan following the HMIP inspection. In addition to this an item on Child Sexual Exploitation was received, which detailed the partnership approach to dealing with sexual and criminal exploitation (including county lines).

The Committee has considered the Right for Children transformation programme which provided an update on the activities set out in the transformation programme at its November meeting. The item on the Big Conversation provided the Committee with an update on the programme and collaboration with children, young people and families.

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting in September 2019, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an update on Jane Lane School, a College for Cognition and Learning. The report explained the steps that have been taken to address the issues identified in the Ofsted report on the School presented earlier in the year and the processes being followed by the School and the Authority. Feedback was also received from the School's Interim Executive Board on the improvements made and their impact on the children and families. The meeting also looked at Teacher supply and recruitment with Members learning about the the steps being taken to increase the recruitment of teachers to schools in Walsall, including newly qualified teachers (NQTs). As well as the steps being taken to retain those teachers already recruited, including recently qualified teachers (RQTs).

In October 2019 the Committee focussed on the SEND Local Area Improvement Programme to understand the improvement programme established in response to the local area inspection that had been carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. This included the production of the Authority's Written Statement of Action to address the nine areas of concern identified during the inspection and the timescales involved. Members also heard about Education, Health and Care Plans and were provided with an overview of the actions and progress being made to ensure the meeting of the requirements for EHCPs by the Authority. Other issues raised included funding considerations, the restructuring of the Access & Achievement division of Children's Services and the introduction of new online resources to assist with the processing of EHCP applications. An update on the Right for Children Transformation Programme was provided explaining the latest phase of the transformation programme and the activities associated with it. It was explained how feedback from children and families, developing an evidence-based locality offer and the realignment of Children's Services resources to the localities was taking place.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on in September and November 2019.

In September Members considered the Walsall Town Centre Masterplan which aimed to provide a vision of a plan that would re-imagine Walsall Town Centre over the next 20 years amid declining retail footfall. The Committee was guided through various masterplan interventions which aimed to stimulate investor interest and confidence in Walsall.

In October Members received an update on Section 106 contributions by the Planning Group Manager.

The Committee was guided through the Section 106 process which was set out as follows:

- Initial stages of negotiating with developers on funding;
- Negotiating specific contributions from developers;
- Consultation with Elected Members;
- Receiving spending contributions.

The Committee considered two petitions which received more than 500 signatures. The first in regard to a Marked, Safe Route along National Cycling Route 5. The second to a request a traffic management plan to reduce incidences of speeding on Beechdale which led to recommendations being made to Cabinet to tackle speeding in the area.

The Committee also received a presentation from Sarah Middleton, Chief Executive of the Black Country Consortium and Mark Lavender, Head of Programme Management about the role of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The Committee were informed of the latest business, employment, environmental and economic statistics related to the Black Country. Members noted the

previous the LEP's Assurance Framework on the Governance arrangements for LEP's across the country.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting in September the Committee were consulted on the dental out of hours services for the West Midlands, Members were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals and feedback their comments. The Committee also considered the item 'spotlight on mental health' which provided an overview of the commissioning and provision of mental health services in Walsall.

At its meeting in October Members of the Committee were provided with a presentation on The Black Country and Birmingham NHS Long Term Plan, and financial monitoring report. An item on Walsall Together S75 Agreement detailed the purpose, scope and progress of the Walsall Together S75 agreement between Walsall Council and Walsall Healthcare Trust.

At its November meeting the Committee considered the Safeguarding Adults Report 2018/19, which provided an overview of the partnership performance in relation to safeguarding adults, and the authorities new approach to domestic abuse and the Public Health Outcomes framework.

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