

## Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda  
Item No. 6

19 June 2018

### Areas of focus for 2018/19

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Councillor C. Towe – Education & Skills

### Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant background information for Members so that the Committee's areas of focus can be agreed for 2018/19.

It is important for Members to consider the wide range of potential issues within their remit and which they could consider during the year.

When agreeing items, it is important that consideration is given to the level of value the Committee could add, taking into account the tools and performance measures available to support them in their work.

### Remit

Following Annual Council, the remit of the Committee has been agreed as follows:

*All aspects and general services related to the education and learning of children and young people. The scrutinising of education and learning performance in relation to the following Corporate Plan priority:*

- *Children have the best start in life and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.*

A presentation will be given at the meeting on 19 June 2018, providing more detail about the Committee's remit and the services that fall within it.

### Items recommended from previous year

The following items were recommended for consideration by the committee in the last municipal year, but were not dealt with and may be carried forward:

- Educational attainment (This is being considered as agenda item 8)
- Report of the Chair of the SENDI Challenge Board
- School places planning
- Pupil premium
- Teacher recruitment and supply

Additional items that the Committee may also wish to consider could include:

- ESF funding for skills development
- Autism outreach
- Pupil exclusions from schools
- The New Leaf Inclusion Centre
- Out-of-Borough schooling
- Educational attainment of looked after children
- The forthcoming SEND inspection
- The transformation plan

### **Budget scrutiny**

Monitoring the financial performance of the Council is a valuable and important task that Scrutiny Committees are ideally placed to perform. It assists Members in identifying areas of operation that are underperforming that may require scrutiny. Therefore, it is suggested that the Committee receives a financial end-of-year outturn report and quarterly outturn forecasts throughout the year.

It is also suggested that the Committee considers the proposed 2019/20 revenue and capital budgets at its meetings held between October 2018 and January 2019.

### **Council performance**

The Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2021, as agreed by the Council in February 2018, sets the strategic direction for the authority by reference to five priorities. Each priority has a number of measures allocated to it. Scrutiny committees may wish to consider monitoring progress against the measures that sit within their remit. The priorities and measures within the remit of this Committee are:

<b><i>Priority: Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well</i></b>		
<i>Ref</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Measure</i>
<i>Ch1</i>	<i>Children will be ready for school</i>	<i>Percentage of pupils reaching a good level of development (GLD) at the end of reception</i>
<i>Ch2</i>	<i>The gaps in educational attainment between the least and the most deprived communities will be narrowed and for all underachieving</i>	<i>The progress Free School Meals children can make</i>

## **Pre-scrutiny**

A copy of the Forward Plans of key decisions from Walsall Council's Cabinet and the Black Country Joint Executive Committee are attached at Agenda item 9. Updates of these will be provided to the Committee at subsequent meetings. Members should consider the forthcoming decisions and consider if there are any issues that they may wish to review and seek to influence prior to the Cabinet making a decision on these matters.

## **Working groups**

A working group is an effective method for Members of scrutiny committees to consider an issue in depth over a number of months and to produce a final report and recommendations to the committee. In due course the report and recommendations can be considered by the Cabinet and/or Council. The challenge for Members is selecting the right topic at the right time and to provide the working group with an achievable brief. Resource wise it is recommended that only one working group be established at a time.

## **Prioritisation**

The remit of the Committee is very broad and the range of issues that could be considered during the year is vast. The challenge that Members face is in prioritising those issues that are the most important whilst still leaving sufficient capacity to address other issues that may arise during the year. To assist Members to manage the broad topics available, it is important that alternative methods of being informed and updated, away from Committee meetings, are used effectively. For example, Members could request briefing notes on particular topics thereby helping to create additional capacity for more substantial items at Committee meetings.


In terms of scheduling items, it is important that an agenda includes a manageable amount of business to enable the Committee to focus on topics in depth rather than to carry out superficial treatment that may require the Committee to revisit the topic at a later date.

## **Recommendation:**

**That Members consider the range of issues within this report and formulate and agree a work programme for the year.**

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