

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 27th June 2023, 6:00pm

In Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Walsall

Committee Members present:

Councillor Hicken (Chair)
Councillor Jukes (Vice Chair)
Councillor Garcha
Councillor Latham
Councillor Rattigan
Councillor C. Statham
Councillor Whitehouse

Portfolio Holders present: Councillor Elson

Officers present:

Colleen Male	Director, Children's Social Work
Isabelle Vanderheeren	Director, Early Help
Nikki Gough	Democratic Services Officer

1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Harrison and Nasreen.

2 Substitutions

There were no substitutions.

3 Declarations of interest and party whip

No declarations of interest or party whip were received.

4 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

5 Minutes

A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 was submitted.

[Annexed]

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

6 Areas of Focus 2023-24

The Committee received presentations from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and Officers on services within the remit of the Committee (annexed). Priorities for 2023/24 were described – which included the following:

- Reducing demand
- Developing a highly skilled/stable workforce
- Developing a mature strategic partnership platform
- Responding to recommendations from inspectors and national agendas.

In response to a series of questions from Members Officers informed the Committee of the Daisy Project which worked with families to prevent repeated removals and break generational cycles. It was noted that this was no longer a standalone team, as it was now based within each locality. Officers described work that was planned to identify what was needed deliver a youth offer in the Borough and attract funding for this.

Members were given an overview of the residential children's homes in the borough and the plans in progress for two new homes – one of which would be an assessment home and the other for more complex needs.

The Committee considered the work programme items it received during the previous municipal year and items which they considered important to scrutinise in the 2023/24 municipal year.

Resolved:

That the following items be included as areas of focus for the Committee in the 2023-24 municipal year:

- Youth Justice - Disproportionality and Transition
- Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring
- Draft Budget & Capital Programme
- Locality Hubs
- Family Hubs
- Early Help Strategy
- Young Carers
- Private Fostering
- Social Worker Recruitment and Retention
- Intra Familial Abuse Strategy
- Safeguarding Annual Report
- Exploitation (Partnership approach)

7 Recommendation Tracker

The Committee received the tracker of recommendations from previous meetings, including progress made and outstanding items.

[Annexed]

Resolved:

That the recommendation tracker be noted.

8 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be 26 September 2023

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 7:15pm.

Signed:

Date: