

13 June 2011

Consideration of Panel Work Programme for 2011/12

Ward(s) All

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R. Andrew

Summary of report:

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant background information for Members so that the Panels work programme can be agreed for 2011/12.

It is important for Members to consider the wide range of potential issues within their remits that they could consider during the year which could range from council specific to completely external issues.

When agreeing items it is important that consideration is given to what, value the Panel can add and what tools and performance measures are available to support them in their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Member's consider the range of items within their remit available to them and agree a work programme for 2011/12 along with any potential working groups and their membership.

Resource and legal considerations:

In terms of resources it is important that the right balance and number of items and working groups are selected so that the work programme can be completed during the year without placing undue pressure on Member capacity.

Legal considerations for specific items will need to be addressed as and when necessary based on the items that are selected for inclusion on the work programme.

Citizen impact:

An effective work programme will enable the Panel to focus its work on the most important issues within its remit. Consideration of these issues and subsequent recommendations, if accepted, could improve the quality of services delivered to

local residents.

Environmental impact:

The level of environmental impact will be dependant on which issues are selected to become a part of the panels work programme for 2011/12. The borough's Sustainable Community Strategy places an importance on considering the impact of present decisions on future generations which includes environmental issues.

Performance management:

The report asks Members to consider performance management information when deciding on their work programme, and also to consider how they wish to use performance management information and tools in assisting them with their work over the course of the year.

Equality Implications:

Ensuring equality for all is a key theme in the boroughs Sustainable Community Strategy as well as being one of the Council's core values. Members are advised to consider what, if any, equality implications there are for any items on their work programme.

Consultation:

Members may wish to consider the results of any formal or informal consultation exercises, including that with the public and partners, when considering what items they wish to include in their work programme. Whilst Council officers carry out a range of consultation activity on behalf of the Council, Members themselves engage with the public on a much more frequent basis and it is valuable to consider feedback from these sources as well.

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Introduction

At the start of each municipal year it is good practice for scrutiny and performance panels to spend some time discussing and agreeing its work programme for the year ahead for issues within its remit.

As Members will already be aware scrutiny and performance panel remits were amended by Council at its meeting on 23 and 25 May 2011. For information the Panels remit in Article 6 of the Walsall Council Constitution now reads as:

Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel

All aspects and general services related to serving children and young people for example; education, children services, youth services within the functions set out in section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Work Programme

In agreeing its work programme for 2011/12 the Panel will be informed from a range of sources, including all 60 Members, last years Panel work streams and suggested carry over items, Council Officers, and Partners.

When agreeing the items to be included in its work programme focus should be given to the range of performance management information available that could assist the Panel with each particular issue. A whole host of performance information is available on a range of subjects that Members could utilise to measure success or otherwise.

Working Groups

Members need to decide whether they want to operate any working groups for this year. Working Groups are at their most effective when they are considering broad policy areas that require detailed investigation time that cannot be completed at Panel level. The Panel will set the working group remit, its membership and once a working group has completed its investigations it will report its findings and recommendations to the Panel for consideration and adoption.

It is very important that Member capacity is considered when deciding on what working groups are formed as many members sit on more than one panel and their respective working groups. As such getting suitable dates in the municipal diary and getting suitable attendance at those meetings is difficult if too many working groups are formed. In previous years experience and given the number of Panel's in this years municipal diary, it is suggested that each Panel should look to operate one working group at any one time. Panels that wish to operate more than working group during the year should timetable the second to start as the first finishes.

A copy of the councils working group toolkit has been despatched separately to Members and is available to members of the public by request. Member's are asked to familiarise themselves with this toolkit ahead of deciding what, if any, working groups

Value for Money Service Reviews

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel has developed a value for money (vfm) toolkit to assist Members if it is decided to complete a service review. Previously, the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel used the value for money toolkit to review the Councils Communication and Payroll and Pensions services. The two reviews were well received by both Members and Officers and resulted in positive recommendations for both services. The Corporate Panel recommended that other Panel's also look to use this toolkit and this recommendation was endorsed by the scrutiny working group of Chair's and Vice-Chairs.

The vfm assessment tool provides a framework for members in partnership with services to work through and is divided into 3 broad themes:

1. What does it cost to provide this service? (economy)
2. How is this service performing? (efficiency)
3. What quality is the service being provided? (effectiveness)

For each of these themes there is the opportunity/potential for scrutiny panels with the service being assessed to benchmark with other service providers to give a clearer picture of relative performance.

The aim is that on completing this assessment scrutiny members will be able to make a judgement regarding the vfm provided by the service and identify and recommend any potential further action.

The vfm toolkit can be used to support the investigations of working groups or independently. When used independently the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel appointed a lead member who liaised with the service area whilst the toolkit is completed and then reports back their findings to the Panel for agreement of recommendations and any other further action that may be necessary.

Suggested Items

Appendix One contains a number of suggested items completed on a standard template to assist Members with deciding what they wish to include on their work programme. This template requires the following points to be considered-

- o **What the Issue Is**
- o **Where it has come from-** for example it could be a carry over item from last year's panel, a suggestion from a Councillor or member of the public or it could be a new item officers are aware of that is coming up this year,
- o **Why it is important-** with limited time available to Members they need to be able to prioritise their work and concentrate on those things that really matter.
- o **Who it affects-** Does it impact on any particular ward or user group? Does it concern partner agencies or staff groups? Any potential equalities issues may be highlighted here if the item is likely to have a disproportionate affect on any particular group.
- o **How can scrutiny add value-** What specifically can Scrutiny do? E.g. provide feedback and recommendations ahead of a Cabinet (or partner executive) decision, support the development of policy, service review, public engagement etc. Suggestions have also been made here for if the item is particularly suited to a particular method of scrutiny such as a working group or value for money review.

- ø **Timings-** This will highlight any critical timings that would need to be taking into consideration such as statutory deadlines which would dictate when scrutiny would need to have considered the item by if they are to have any valuable input

The items highlighted at appendix one are not an exhaustive list, but only those that it is possible to provide in advance of the meeting. Members should consider these alongside any items they wish to raise themselves and use them to develop a balanced work programme that concentrates on what is important to them and on where they believe they can make a difference.

Appendix Two is a copy of the forward plan for May to September 2011.

Appendix 1

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Education – including policy and monitoring of school performance					
Who from	Previous years panel	Individual Member	Officer	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	<p>The Education Bill proposes fundamental changes to Education, including reducing the role of the Council in supporting schools to improve attainment. Schools help shape future citizens and we need to develop a new partnership based relationship between the council and schools.</p> <p>Promoting school improvement in maintained schools will continue, but with new focus on school to school support. School clusters will grow in importance. Improving educational attainment remains key to the future success of Walsall, yet the local authority will only have limited powers to support/challenge Academy schools</p>					
Who does it affect?	All schools in Walsall and pupils. Education Contract (Serco) and Council Trades Services					
Who needs to be involved?	Local Authority, Headteachers, Council Heads of Services(trading), Council Officers					
How can scrutiny add value?	<p>Helping to develop robust new arrangements during a period of rapid change and explore how all schools, including academies could be accountable to the people of Walsall.</p> <p>Holding schools to account for the impact they have on CYP in Walsall.</p>					
Timings	Ongoing throughout year.					
Performance Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School performance data 					
Corporate Priority	<p>Communities and neighbourhoods; the economy; and health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Key priorities within CYPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote higher aspiration in Walsall and further improve students' attainment, particularly at key 					

Appendix 1

	<p>stages 4 and 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the number of Looked After Children through early intervention and support• Achieve better health outcomes for children and their families by improving the uptake of breastfeeding and reducing obesity and smoking• To improve post 16 education, training and sustained employment rates for young people aged 16-25 and reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy
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Appendix 1

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Performance of the Serco Contract					
Who from	Previous years panel Yes	Individual Member	Officer Yes	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	.The council are in a long term strategic relationship with WCS Serco and Scrutiny have been looking at different aspects of the contract and its performance. The precise areas to be looked at through the year can be agreed and could include Finance (this would include the role and function of the Schools Forum) and Admissions (this is generally of interest to Members and has got more complex) among other topics.					
Who does it affect?	All aspects of the education service across the borough					
Who needs to be involved?	.WCS Serco					
How can scrutiny add value?	.This enables a wider group of Members to gain knowledge of the services delivered for the Council and to hold appropriate officers to account for the delivery of those services					
Timings	Regularly through the year					
Performance Information	Performance information related to the contract and to the topic would be included					

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Sneyd School Closure					
Who from	Previous years panel Yes	Individual Member	Officer	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	.Members have been monitoring this process and further reports would enable this to be completed					
Who does it affect?	CYP who previously attended Sneyd School, some impact on other schools and colleges					
Who needs to be involved?	.WCS Serco and Sneyd School					
How can scrutiny add value?	.Can look out for the children within the process					
Timings	A report in June/July and a final report in the autumn					
Performance Information	Outcomes will be reported on children and on the wider school					

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Improving the Lives of Walsall's Children and Young People Walsall Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2011 – 2014 and 4 Key Priorities					
Who from	Previous years panel	Individual Member	Officer	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	<p>The Children and Young People's Partnership Board has produced a new three year Children and Young People's Plan. While a CYPP is no longer a statutory requirement, the revocation of the requirement does state that local authorities still have the flexibility to produce a CYPP should they feel it necessary. The Children and Young People's Partnership Board have agreed to produce one as it demonstrates our commitment to continue joint planning and where possible integrated delivery to improve outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>The CYPP Sub Group responsible for producing the Plan have rationalised the children's planning arrangements in line with national and local working smarter requirements. This has led to the production of a CYPP in a placemat/poster format which can be displayed in public places and offices. This highlights our CYPP main priorities and provides details on where additional information on the Core Strategies and other elements of the Plan can be found. The information which underpins this and forms the additional components of our CYPP will be held on a Walsall Children's Partnership website which will be adapted and enhanced between May – July 2011. This will include the core strategies and their supporting strategies, needs analysis information (including our CAP and Area Partnership profiles), stakeholder and consultation information and our CYPP scorecard which will be used to demonstrate our progress in implementing the Plan. The current website will be modified to ensure it is fit for purpose in consultation with stakeholders and it will be closely aligned to the Children's Service Directory.</p> <p>The CYPP which is attached to this report is a summary paper which pulls together the key components of the CYPP.</p>					

	<p>It demonstrates our approach in streamlining the planning process and outlines our alignment with the corporate borough wide priorities and Corporate Plan. The Summary CYPP provides information on the scope of each of the Core Strategies and the bookshelf of strategies which forms our detailed strategic approach.</p>
<p>Who does it affect?</p>	<p>The implementation of the CYPP will directly affect our children, young people and families across Walsall.</p> <p>A comprehensive review of performance and needs analysis took place during November and December 2010 and identified our key challenges. The main CYPP priorities were established as a result of the analysis of this information and these priorities relate directly to Walsall's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>1. Promote higher aspiration in Walsall and further improve students' attainment particularly at key stages 4 and 5</p> <p>During the 2009/10 academic year 49.5% of young people gained 5 A*-C GCSEs. While this figure has improved over recent years, there is still a gap in attainment between young people in Walsall and our statistical neighbours.</p> <p>2. Reduce the number of Looked After Children through early intervention and support</p> <p>At the 31st March 2011, there were 518 children and young people who were looked after by the local authority. This has increased steadily over the last 10 years. An analysis of this information indicates that while we have managed to keep admissions to the care system at a consistent rate, children and young people tend to remain looked after for longer periods of time.</p> <p>3. Achieve better health outcomes for children and their families by improving the uptake of breastfeeding and reducing obesity and smoking</p> <p>This priority is aimed at addressing some of the causal factors</p>

	<p>identified in cases of infant and perinatal mortality. Walsall has a higher infant mortality rate than other areas and research has identified smoking, obesity and lack of breastfeeding as possible related factors.</p> <p>Members will be aware of the work undertaken by Scrutiny Panel during the last municipal year on the incidence of obesity amongst high numbers of Walsall school children. These figures are still high when compared to our statistical and West Midlands neighbours and therefore this is included in one of the CYPP key priorities.</p> <p>4. To improve positive activities, post 16 education, training and sustained employment rates for young people aged 16-25 and reduce the incidence of anti social behaviour, offending and teenage conceptions</p> <p>The 6th form Average Points Score (APS) per A level candidate was 650.2 during the 2009/10 academic year. This is slightly lower than our statistical neighbour average and a figure we would wish to address to improve attainment levels of our young people. This priority also relates to our wish to ensure that the majority of young people are engaged in education, employment and training. At 31st march 2011 7.6% were not in education, employment or training. The challenge remains to improve on this figure in the current economic climate.</p> <p>During 2009 there were 59.4 pregnancies per 1,000 teenage girls aged between 15 and 17. This figure is higher than those in other areas and there is a strong correlation between these figures and levels of deprivation. Although there has been a reduction of 11.8% in this figure over the past 10 years a gap still remains between our current position and our nationally set target.</p> <p>Information on positive activities and offending to be added.</p>
<p>Who needs to be involved?</p>	<p>Our Wider Children's workforce have a key role to play in improving the lives of children, young people and their families.</p> <p>In particular the work of Think Family and the development of multiagency teams operating through our children's centres.</p>
<p>How can</p>	<p>Discuss, challenge, be aware of our main priorities and</p>

scrutiny add value?	receive reports on progress. There is also a role for assisting with the action planning process for resolving issues in relation to progress.	
Timings	Quarterly reports on progress	
Performance Information	Key Impact Measures will be reported to manage performance on the main priorities	
	CYPP Priorities	Measures
	Promote higher aspiration in Walsall and further improve students' attainment particularly at key stages 4 and 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. English and maths) • 6th form Average point score per candidate
	Reduce the number of Looked After Children through early intervention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Looked After Children
	Achieve better health outcomes for children and their families by improving the uptake of breastfeeding and reducing obesity and smoking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake of breastfeeding • Reduce incidence of childhood obesity as measured at Yr.6 • % of mothers smoking at delivery • Infant mortality rate
To improve positive activities, post 16 education, training and sustained employment rates for young people aged 16-25 and reduce the incidence of anti social behaviour, offending and teenage conceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-18 year olds in Education, Employment or Training (EET) • Conceptions per 1,000 teenage girls aged 15-17 • Positive activities and 	

Appendix 1

	offending measures to be determined
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Appendices: Appendix 1 CYPP Placemat/Poster (available in June)
Appendix 2 CYPP Summary Document

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Learning Outcomes in Walsall					
Who from	Previous years panel Yes	Individual Member	Officer Yes	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	<p>It is important to keep Members informed about outcomes of children in schools across the borough. That would include overall outcomes such as Key Stage or GCSE results, and would also include the outcomes for particular groups such as Looked After Children.</p> <p>It is intended to develop information on the new area basis so that links can be developed with area plans.</p>					
Who does it affect?	All Children and Schools					
Who needs to be involved?	.WCS Serco					
How can scrutiny add value?	.Members will question to ensure rigour in analysis and aspiration in line with the CYPP					
Timings	When information becomes available through the year					
Performance Information	Key Stage data, GCSE and post 16 results, Early years data, Ofsted outcomes.					

Proposed Items for Scrutiny Work Programme

Issue	Children with Disabilities					
Who from	Previous years panel	Individual Member	Officer	Public	Other Council Committee	Other
Why is it important?	<p>The council are responsible for safeguarding and delivering a range of services to this vulnerable group of children. A significant part of the service is delivered by SERCO and that part of the contract is under discussion.</p> <p>The service was overspent last year and there are challenges in encouraging families to take up a variety of short break options other than residential.</p> <p>The council is making a significant investment building a new 'Eldon' for short breaks and day provision which is due to open in September. Maximising the use of this building is a tool to manage the budget.</p>					
Who does it affect?	Disabled children in the borough and their families.					
Who needs to be involved?	Children's Services, Serco, Disabled children and their parents, care trust , councillors					
How can scrutiny add value?	<p>The scrutiny and overview panel can add value by providing an objective look at whether we are improving outcomes for this group of children and young people.</p> <p>Whether we are taking sufficient account of the views and wishes of this group?</p> <p>Are we maximising our investment in Eldon. Finally the panel can give a steer on balancing wishes and feelings of those involved and managing resources</p>					
Timings						
Performance Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial assessments completed in 7 day time scale 45 .5 % Target 70% overall service outcome 56.8% Core assessments completed in 35 days year total 29 rate 93.1% target 90% 					

Appendix 1

	Serco Performance	Target	Dec 10
	Assessment Service and Family Support Service operational hours: - Service availability complies with agreement.	95%	100.00%
	Processing requests for information from the Council, external service Providers, or from service users: - all requests are logged, and tracking shows they are met in accordance with the agreement.	95%	95.00%
	Processing of service user assessments: - all assessments are processed in accordance with the agreement.	90%	87.50%