

9 November 2021

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 its meeting in October, the Committee received a presentation on an overview of Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Members sought more information on certain areas to receive assurance that the service was meeting the needs of young people in Walsall, it was agreed that this would be reconsidered at a future meeting. An update on the Holiday Activities and foods programme was received, and Members were informed of its success.

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 14 October 2021 and considered two items.

Members received an update on the review of current provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Walsall. The Committee noted and supported the steps being taken to drive the review forward, including establishment of a working group and co-development with head teachers from primary, secondary and special schools. Through the review, consideration is being given to a range of matters including: locality data regarding SEND, exclusions and the factors leading to poor outcomes; special schools' capacity and use of expertise; SEND provision in mainstream schools; the reasons for exclusions/disengagement/children missing education; the encouragement of inclusion via the creation of inclusive cultures based on strong leadership, governance and management. Examination is also being given to comparator models in other local authorities, mainstream presumptions regarding SEND, out-of-Borough placements, the number of children in specialist provision with EHCPs, the increased number of children with autism, and the building of partnership working with other agencies.

The Committee also received a report on the provision of post-16 education and skills support services in Walsall. The Committee noted and supported the steps being taken under the Raising the Participation Age legislation, to encourage young people aged 13 – 19 years into education and/or training, and to provide targeted support for those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). There was discussion of the work undertaken by the post-16 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) team, which had been transferred from Children’s Services to the Employment & Skills team, thereby enabling a joined-up education, employment and skills service to both young and older residents, albeit with a targeted approach and focus on those aged 16 – 24 years. Also discussed were the collaboration with Walsall College and other Black Country local authorities, employer engagement and the role being played by Walsall Works in supporting those young people either ineligible for other support or who are vulnerable due to childcare, debt, housing or mental health.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met on 21 October 2021 and considered two items.

Firstly, Members heard a petition calling for traffic calming measures on Pelsall Lane. The petition had been launched following numerous incidents and a fatal accident. The Committee learnt about the programme of road safety schemes and the challenges in delivering it.

Secondly the Committee received a report on the delivery of electric vehicle charging points in the borough. Members were informed of a funding bid that would provide the area with 35 public charging points. These would mainly be targeted to be installed in areas of the borough that lacked private driveways to charge vehicles. These charging points would assist that Council in meeting its target for charging points required by 2025.

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting on 23rd September, the Committee received an introduction to the Health and Care system in Walsall which provided Members with a context to scrutinise future items. The key item for this agenda, was ‘access to primary care services’. The Managing Director (Walsall CCG) presented a report to Members, who challenged issues and pushed for improvement in this area. A number of recommendations were made, in response to this, a further report will be considered at the next meeting – due to be held on 1st November. The Committee also set the areas of focus for the year, with primary care access remaining a key issue for the Committee along with the Walsall Healthcare Trust CQC improvement plan.

The Committee is scheduled to meet on 1 November 2021. Items on the agenda include:

- Primary care access;
- Draft revenue and capital programme 2022/23-2025/26
- Quarter 2 financial monitoring

A verbal update on the meeting will be provided at the meeting.

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