Children's Services   **Agenda**
Overview & Scrutiny Committee   **Item No. 8**

26th June 2018

Areas of focus for 2018/19

Ward(s)   All

Portfolios: Councillor T. Wilson

Report:

The purpose of this item 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 serving children and young people (excluding education and learning). The scrutinising of 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 provided at the meeting on 26th 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:

- Children's Services Performance Scorecard,
- Child Sexual Exploitation,
- Homelessness,
- Recruitment and retention of social workers,
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services,
- Missing Children,
- Looked After Children,
- Financial Monitoring – focusing on overspends and pressures,
- Annual Complaints Report,
- Report of the Corporate Parenting Board,
- Report of Walsall Safeguarding Children Board,
- Member Reports – visits to children's homes/New Belongings/Council4kids
- A Working Group - focusing on two recommendations from the Ofsted action 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 between October 2018 - 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. An overview of these is included at Appendix 1 to this report.

The priorities and measures within the remit of this Committee are:

Priority: Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well		
Ref	Outcomes	Measure
Ch3	Right children looked after, for the right length of time in the right placement	27. Average length of time in care
Ch4	Care leavers are economically active members of their community	28. Percentage of care leavers not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
Ch5	Young People are prevented from entering the criminal justice system	29. Reduction of first time entrants

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 Committees 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.

A glossary of key abbreviations has been attached at Appendix 2.

Recommendations:

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

Contact Officer:
Nikki Gough
Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01922 654767
✉ nikki.gough@walsall.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan Priorities, outcomes and measures

Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

Ref	Outcomes	Measure
Ch1	Children will be ready for school	25 Percentage of pupils reaching a good level of development (GLD) at the end of reception
Ch2	The gaps in educational attainment between the least and most deprived communities will be narrowed and for all under achieving groups	26 The progress Free School Meals children make
Ch3	Right children looked after, for the right length of time in the right placement	27 Average length of time in care
Ch4	Care leavers are economically active citizens of their community	28 Percentage of care leavers not in education employment or training (NEETs)
Ch5	Young People are prevented from entering the criminal justice system	29 Reduction of first time entrants

Appendix 2 – Key Abbreviations

ATM: Assistant Team Manager

ASYE: Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

BB: The bigger the number, the better

CMEC: Children Missing Education Committee

CMOG: Children at Risk of Exploitation & Missing Operational Group

CPB: Corporate Parenting Board

CPP: Child Protection Plans

CSE: Child Sexual Exploitation

DV: Domestic Violence

EDT: Emergency Duty Team

EHH: Early Help Hub

FGC: Family Group Conferencing

HCPC: Health and Care Professions Council

HWB: Health & Wellbeing Board

IAPT: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

ICPC: Initial Child Protection Conference

IRS: Initial Response Service (team)

LAC: Looked After Children

LGA: Local Government Association

LSCB: Local Safeguarding Children's Board

MARF: Multi-Agency Referral Form

MACE/MASE: Multi-Agency Child Exploitation/Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (meeting)

MASH: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

MDR: Management Decision Record

NAG: NEET Action Group

NEET: Not in Employment, Education or Training

NFA: No Further Action

Appendix 2 – Key Abbreviations

NRM: National Referral Mechanism

ODP: Owning and Driving Performance (training programme)

PEP: Personal Education Plan

PF: Private Fostering

PIF: Practice Improvement Forum

PLO: Public Law Outline

PPO: Police Protection Order

PSW: Principal Social Worker

RAA: Regional Adoption Agency

RCPC: Review Child Protection Conference

RHI: Return Home Interview

RISE: **R**educe no. of LACs;
Improve Practice;
Skilled/stable workforce;
Early help, early on

SB: The smaller the number, the better

SFS: Safeguarding and Family Support (team)

SUTSW: Step Up to Social Work (initiative)

TLC: Transition in Leaving Care (team)