

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **20 June 2007**

By: **Director of Law and Personnel**

Title of report: **Future topic for a scrutiny review**

Purpose of report: **To put forward some options for a future scrutiny review for the committee to carry out**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. decide a topic for a future scrutiny review;**
 - 2. provide guidance to the review board on the scope, issues and approach to be considered; and**
 - 3. agree membership of the review board.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications for the review at this stage.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 Following the completion of the Youth Offending Team scrutiny review in March 2007 there are several options for a scrutiny review to commence in July/August 2007.

2.2 One of the five target outcomes for all children and young people in Every Child Matters (ECM) is 'being healthy' and this is an area that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has not yet covered in the course of its reviews.

2.3 Areas that members might wish to consider for a 'being healthy' scrutiny review are attached at appendix 1. This includes an outline of the national and local picture, local targets and the possible scope for a review in each of the areas.

2.4 During the development of the East Sussex Children and Young People's Plan in 2005 over 4,000 consultation leaflets were completed by children and young people. The review would have the opportunity to use the results of this consultation and, if needed carry out further consultation, either through focus groups or by using electronic survey techniques, such as website or mobile phone voting, to canvas children and young people on their current views.

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Local members: All

Areas to consider for a possible scrutiny review

Smoking cessation

The national and local picture

National Statistics show that in 2004, 7% of boys aged 11 to 15 in England were regular smokers (they smoked at least one cigarette a week) compared with 10% of girls.

During consultation for the East Sussex Children & Young People's Plan 2006/08 the main issue that young people said affected their health the most was smoking, with 32% rating it as their top concern (next were exam stress at 29% and alcohol at 15%)

Local target/aim

The "accessibility and effectiveness of smoking cessation services in relation to young people" is highlighted within the East Sussex Children & Young People's Plan as an area of work

Scrutiny review

The review could address a number of questions, including:

- what is the current level and accessibility of services in East Sussex targeted at the cessation of smoking amongst young people
- how successful have these services been in reducing the numbers of young people who smoke
- what impact national initiatives have had at a local county level
- could the services be improved and if so how

The review could consult young people as to how they view the effectiveness of current services and what additional support/services they feel are needed to reduce the current levels of smoking amongst young people

(An East Sussex Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) review in 2004 looked at alcohol, tobacco and substance misuse across all age groups. Some of the evidence presented to that review could be relevant to a subsequent Children's Services review)

Alcohol misuse

The national and local picture

The amount of alcohol consumed by children aged 11-13 between 2000-2006 has increased by 82.6% for girls and 43.4% for boys (from Alcohol Concern, the national agency for alcohol misuse)

During consultation for the East Sussex Children & Young People's Plan 2006/08 alcohol was the third highest issue that young people said affected their health, with 15% rating it as their top concern

Alcohol misuse was highlighted as an area of concern by members during the course of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) review. Members noted that alcohol misuse was often a contributory factor in the offences for which young people came before the Youth Courts. A reduction in the number of young people involved in alcohol misuse could have a positive impact on reducing the numbers of young people offending.

Local targets

Council Plan objective - tackling inappropriate alcohol and drug use (across all ages) is an objective in the Council Plan under Community Services

Children & Young People's Plan outcome priority – fewer young people involved in alcohol [or substance] misuse

Scrutiny review

This would be a cross cutting review, as the issue also relates to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in terms of the East Sussex Drug Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2006-08 and the enforcement work of Trading Standards in regard to underage sales

The review could address a number of questions, including:

- what is the current level and accessibility of services/initiatives in East Sussex targeted at reducing the numbers of young people involved in alcohol misuse
- how successful have these services/initiatives been in reducing the numbers of young people who misuse alcohol
- could the services be improved and if so how

As part of its remit, the scrutiny review could include an assessment of:

- how alcohol misuse impacts on local communities in terms of anti-social behaviour and criminal activities, and therefore leads to an increase in young offenders
- possible links between alcohol misuse and teenage pregnancies

The review could consult young people as to how they view the effectiveness of current support/initiatives in relation to alcohol misuse and what additional help they feel is needed to reduce alcohol misuse amongst young people

Key plans/strategies to consider – DAAT Alcohol Misuse Strategy, Youth Justice Plan, East Sussex Community Safety Strategy, Crime Reduction Strategies (District & Borough)

(An East Sussex Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) review in 2004 looked at alcohol, tobacco and substance misuse across all age groups. Some of the evidence presented to that review could be relevant to a subsequent Children's Services review)

Healthier lifestyles – exercise and sport

The national and local picture

Whilst the percentage of young people receiving 2 hours or more of PE per week in school lesson time has increased since 1999 from 33% to 49% in 2002, this still means that 50% of young people are not receiving 2 hours of PE a week (Sport England national survey 2002)

During consultation for the East Sussex Children & Young People's Plan 2006/08 87% of those surveyed said that they wanted more activities and things to do, with sporting activities, football and swimming top of the list

The Sussex County Sports Partnership Strata Survey (2004) revealed that whilst 59% of year 7 students take part in out of school hours sport, this figure falls to 47% by year 10 with a greater fall in girls' participation

Local targets

Children & Young People's Plan outcome priority - more children exercising regularly and engaged in sport. Targets include:

- increasing the proportion of children spending a minimum of 2 hours each week on PE at school to 85% by 2008
- increasing participation in out of school hours sport at Key Stage 4 (aged 14) by 1% annually

Scrutiny review

The review could address a number of questions, including:

- what initiatives are in place to encourage young people to participate in sporting activities
- how effective have partners been in reaching key targets in sport participation
- are improvements/further initiatives needed to increase the numbers of young people participating in sporting activities

Consultation with young people could focus on what factors are limiting the amount of time they spend taking part in sporting activities, particularly girls

Key plans/strategies to consider – Sports Development Strategy and District and Borough Corporate Plans