

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee: Work programme at a glance

UPDATED: June 2009

Please note that this list is correct at the time of writing but may be subject to change. The order in which items are listed does not necessarily reflect the order they will appear on the final agenda for the meeting.

Standing Items

| Topic Issue | Objectives and summary |
|---|--|
| Announcements | Update, for information, on any matter of significant public or member concern listed not on the agenda elsewhere. |
| Cabinet Forward Plan | Opportunity for members to identify and highlight relevant issues from the Plan for scrutiny to consider. Members can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - request a briefing paper to be sent to committee members, - request an item on a future scrutiny committee agenda to address specific questions raised |
| Quarterly Performance Monitoring reports against the Council Plan | Exception report providing a summary on the performance targets relating to the ASC department which are not currently on target. Opportunity for members to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - question and challenge action being taken to bring the target back on track - request a more detailed report on the issue - consider carrying out a scrutiny review on the issue |

| Topic Issue | Objectives and summary | People providing evidence |
|---|---|--|
| Monday 13th July 2009 | | |
| Standing items as listed on page one | | |
| Equality Strategy | Members asked for an update report in mid 2009 on key areas of work, outcomes against the 5 outcomes for children, as outlined in the Children's Act, and plans for revision of the Strategy A report on the Equality Strategy was presented to the Committee in November 2008. | Sarah Dyde, Policy Manager (Equalities) |
| Aiming high for disabled children | This is a 3 year government funded initiative to reduce the gap between the life chances of disabled children and their families and those of other children and families. ESCC has received funding to develop a pilot to provide short breaks for children. | Bernadette Dawes, Aiming High Development Manager |
| Scrutiny review of governing body clerks | Final report of the review board outlining the findings and recommendations | Scrutiny Review Board |
| School Improvement Service | The School Improvement Service has been provided by CfBT for the past 7 years. From September 2009 the service will return in house and those staff currently employed by CfBT to provide the service will return to the County Council. The report will highlight how the process for returning the service in-house is being managed and the future aims of the service. | Amanda Watson, Transition Programme Manager |
| Monday 21st September 2009 | | |
| Standing items as listed on page one (except for quarter monitoring item) | | |
| Reconciling policy and Resources (RPR) | Opportunity for members to consider and comment on the policy steers, identified strategic risks, performance issues and financial planning Scrutiny plays a key part in the RPR process and considers and provides feedback to Cabinet throughout the budget setting process. | Matt Dunkley, Director of Children's Services |
| Annual report of Local Safeguarding Children Board | The committee receives the Safeguarding Board business plan and annual report on an annual basis. | Fiona Johnson, Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance |

| Topic Issue | Objectives and summary | People providing evidence |
|---|--|---|
| Annual report - Safeguarding Children – Member and Senior Management monitoring | The Lead Member for Children and Families and senior managers with Children's Services carries out a series of visits to the social care duty teams and conduct quarterly file audits to ensure that services to safeguard children are properly co-ordinated and managed effectively. Opportunity for the committee to monitor concerns and ensure improvements are put in place where necessary | Fiona Johnson, Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance |
| Annual Complaints report | Report outlines the number of complaints received by the department, the stage at which they were rectified, common themes identified from the complaints and the action being taken as a result of them. The report is used by the committee to identify key issues for future monitoring or to consider as a future scrutiny review. | Caryl Sequeira, Complaints Manager |
| Annual report - School surpluses and deficits | The report outlines school balances at 31 March each year. Report to highlight the number of schools with a surplus or deficit and what percentage these are of their overall budget. Report to also highlight the number of schools who are managing their budgets well. | Greg Roberts, Manager, Strategic Finance |
| Monday 23rd November 2009 | | |
| Standing items as listed on page one | | |
| Children's Centres | The Committee has been receiving regular reports on the progress of the Children's Centres in East Sussex. At the November 2008 meeting members requested a further report in November 2009 which focuses on the centres are having on improving outcomes for children. | |
| 14-19 Agenda | Changes in the provision of 14-19 education will take place from 2011. The department will then receive funding for the provision of post 16 education and will be responsible for commissioning services across the county. | Fiona Wright , Head of Strategic Development (Quality, Learning & Skills) |
| Report on part time timetables | Report to include data on children who are on part time tables but are not known to the Youth Offending Team. Youth Justice Worker to be invited to attend the meeting. The committee received a report in September 2008 on the effectiveness of the new guidance in limiting the use of part-time timetables by schools, particularly with regard to young people known to the Youth Offending Team. Update report requested on this item. | Sarah-Jane Pateman, Acting Principal Education Welfare Officer |

| Topic Issue | Objectives and summary | People providing evidence |
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| Recruitment and Retention of Teachers | Update reports on these issues highlighted in previous table top review. A key issue for scrutiny to monitor in the future is the work being done by the department around succession planning and head teacher appointments. A table top review on this was carried out by Councillor Dowling, who reported his findings to the committee in November 2008. | |
| Scrutiny review of support for school governors | Initial update report on progress by the department in taking forward the recommendations outlined in the final report by the review board. | Peter Davidson, Governor Services Manager |
| Scrutiny review of the effect of alcohol misuse on the health of children and young people | Final update report on progress in taking forward the recommendations outlined in the final report by the review board. | Vicky Finmore, Operations Manager, Children's Services Department |
| December 2009 - RPR Board | | |
| Reconciling policy and Resources (RPR) | Opportunity for members to comment on the proposed savings in the department and to consider whether these are in line with the policy steers. Scrutiny plays a key part in the RPR process and considers and provides feedback to Cabinet throughout the budget setting process. | Matt Dunkley, Director of Children's Services |
| March 2010 | | |
| Standing items as listed on page one | | |
| Reconciling policy and Resources | Opportunity for members to consider the action taken by the department in response to scrutiny comments earlier in the process. Also provides an opportunity for members to highlight ways of improving scrutiny involvement in the process in the future | Matt Dunkley, Director of Children's Services |

Contact Officer: Gillian Mauger, Scrutiny Lead Officer, 01273 481796 or gillian.mauger@eastsussex.gov.uk

Distribution list:

- Scrutiny committee members
- Matt Dunkley
- Penny Gaunt
- Helen Davies
- Hazel Cunningham
- Louise Carter
- Vicky Stanton
- Kate Matthews
- Becky Haynes

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee: progress review

UPDATED: June 2009

| Scrutiny Reviews | | |
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| Issue | Progress Summary | Action |
| Effect of alcohol misuse on the health of children and young people. | <p>The aim of the review was to examine the range of policies and initiatives in place at a national and local level aimed at informing and educating children and young people about the dangers of alcohol misuse</p> <p>Membership – Councillor Pat Ost (chair), Councillor Joy Waite, Carole Shaves, Sam Gregory</p> <p>Review carried out between September 2007 and February 2008.</p> <p>Report to Scrutiny – March 2009</p> <p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice concerns to Central Government and Local Government Association about the mixed messages being given out at a national level about alcohol and ask that it be addressed • PSHE Team to assist and encourage schools to obtain feedback on the quality of alcohol lessons • Develop initiatives that provide information for parents and carers on the impact of alcohol misuse, harm reduction strategies and support available <p>Initial update on action plan – March 2009:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slippage on timescales originally set for meeting recommendations due to the delay in the publication of associated national guidance | <p>Final update – November 2009</p> <p>Committee requested a more detailed evidence based report be submitted</p> <p>Report also to include a more detailed breakdown of the data available on drugs in East Sussex. Police representative to be invited to present the information.</p> |

| Scrutiny Reviews | | |
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| Issue | Progress Summary | Action |
| Governing bodies clerks | <p>One of the recommendations from the review on support for school governors was that a further piece of work be carried out by the review board to look at the roles and responsibilities of governing body clerks and provide a judgement on whether a centralised clerking service in East Sussex would be better and more cost effective</p> <p>Membership: Sarah Maynard, Councillor Pat Ost, Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre (chair) and Jeremy Taylor</p> | Report to Scrutiny - July 2009 |
| Support for School Governors | <p>The aim of the review was to Assess, and make recommendations on, how best the local authority can ensure that all governing bodies have the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil their overall responsibly of helping their school provide the best possible education for the pupils.</p> <p>Membership: Sarah Maynard, Councillor Pat Ost, Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre (chair) and Jeremy Taylor</p> <p>Review carried out between May and October 2008.</p> <p>Report to Scrutiny – November 2008</p> <p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Improvement Partners (SIP) to ensure there is a governing body representative at all termly SIP meetings with the headteacher • All new governors to be expected to attend induction training • Training programme strengthened around three clearly defined areas of induction, core functions and specialist/advanced training | <p>Initial update – November 2009</p> <p>Final update – June 2010</p> |
| Recruitment and Retention of Teachers | <p>This was a short table top review to assess the current national and local situation with regard to the recruitment and retention of teachers and decide whether a full scrutiny review was required.</p> <p>Membership: Councillor Dowling</p> <p>Report to Scrutiny – March 2008</p> <p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full scrutiny review not required at this time | Update report – November 2009 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current exit questionnaires for teachers to be improved to ensure the right information is being captured <p>Update report - November 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity and sustainability of School Recruitment Workforce Team has now been addressed • Exit questionnaires are now in line with the one used by ESCC staff • Teacher vacancies not an issue in East Sussex at this time <p>A key issue for scrutiny to monitor in the future is the work being done by the department around succession planning and head teacher appointments.</p> | |
| <p>Youth Offending Team (YOT)</p> | <p>The aim of the review was to establish how effective the work of the YOT has been with regard to youth crime prevention and the role that partnership working had had in this.</p> <p>Membership – Councillors Jay Kramer (chair), David Elkin, Pat Ost, Rosalyn St Pierre and Carole Shaves,</p> <p>Review carried out between September 2006 and March 2007.</p> <p>Report to Scrutiny – March 2007</p> <p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YOT and Sussex Police to hold discussions prior to court in relation to any case where a custodial sentence is being considered to enable a consensus to be reached which can be presented to magistrates • Prevent and Deter Groups across East Sussex to standard paperwork, criteria for identifying young people at risk and names to ensure uniformity across the county • Terms of reference for Chief Officers' Group of YOT to be updated and each statutory member to have a representative on the group who has accountability for their service <p>Initial update on action plan – November 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several recommendations incorporated into the Youth Crime Prevention Strategy as standard practice • YOT and Sussex Police to hold meetings twice a year to discuss issues of common concern, rather than prior to each court case as review recommended <p>Final update on action plan – September 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All recommendations completed | <p>Further report requested on part time timetables – July 2009</p> |

| Committee items | | |
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| Issue | Objectives and summary | Action |
| Children's Centres | The Committee has been receiving regular reports on the progress of the Children's Centres in East Sussex. At the November 2008 meeting members requested a further report in November 2009 which focuses on the impact that the centres are having on improving outcomes for children. | Report to November 2009 meeting |
| Combined Reintegration and Secondary Behaviour Support Service | The committee received an update report in March 2008 regarding recent developments in the Reintegration Service and the Secondary Behaviour Support Service following the reorganisation of them in April 2007. Further work was now being undertaken to combine these two services into one and members asked that feedback be provided to them on how this change of provision impacted on service users. | |
| Common Assessment Framework | This was fully implemented in April 2008 and will potentially be a big lever for change. There is concern though that it could create a big demand for services. Committee to look at the Framework and the impact that it has had on officers, clients and services, after it has been in place for a year | |
| Complaints report | An annual report is presented to the committee on the number of complaints received by the department, the stage at which they were rectified, common themes identified from the complaints and the action being taken as a result of them. The report is used by the committee to identify key issues for future monitoring or to consider as a future scrutiny review. | Report to September meetings |
| Equality Strategy | A report on the Equality Strategy was presented to the Committee in November 2008. Members asked for an update report in mid 2009 on key areas of work, outcomes against the 5 outcomes for children, as outlined in the Children's Act, and plans for revision of the Strategy | Report to July 2009 meeting |

| Issue | Objectives and summary | Action |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| Local Safeguarding Children Board | <p>The committee received a report at the 26 September 2006 meeting on the arrangements for the establishment of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the business plan for 2006/07.</p> <p>The committee requested that it receive the Safeguarding Board business plan and annual report on an annual basis.</p> | Report to September meetings |
| Not in education, employment or training (NEET) | <p>Policy Steer 5.11 in the Council Plan aims to increase the choices for vocational learning opportunities for children and young people aged 14-19 and reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). One of the performance indicators linked to this policy is National Indicator 117 (which is also a Local Area Agreement reward target) which aims to reduced the number of 16 to 18 year olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)</p> <p>This target was reported red at the March 2009 committee meeting and members asked for a further report on this.</p> | |
| Reducing teenage pregnancies | <p>The committee received a report in March 2008 regarding recent pregnancy date and key work aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy rates. A further report was brought to the committee in March 2009 to bring members up to date on outcomes from previous work in this area and details on additional work that has been done.</p> <p>The committee agreed that information on teenage pregnancies should be reported to the committee annually. It also requested that information be included within this report in future on conception rates for all ages, so that these figures could be put in context.</p> | Report to March meetings |
| Safeguarding Children – Member and Senior Management monitoring | <p>The Lead Member for Children and Families and senior managers with Children's Services carry out a series of visits to the social care duty teams and conduct quarterly file audits to ensure that services to safeguard children are properly co-ordinated and managed effectively.</p> <p>Annual report to the committee outlining the findings of these visits and audit checks. Opportunity for the committee to monitor concerns and ensure improvements are put in place where necessary</p> | Report to September meetings |

| Issue | Objectives and summary | Action |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| School surpluses and deficits | Annual report outlining school balances at 31 March each year. Report to highlight the number of schools with a surplus or deficit and what percentage these are of their overall budget. Report to also highlight the number of schools who are managing their budgets well. | Report to September meetings |
| Special Education Needs funding | Item identified by Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee in November 2007 and request made to Children's Services Committee to receive a full report on this issue regarding the full impact that changes to the Special Educational Needs funding will have on children, schools and provision of services | |
| Take up of school places | At the March 2008 committee meeting members asked that the current work being done on forecasting further pupil numbers across the county be brought to the committee in due course | |
| Virtual College | A report to Lead Member in May 2009 outlined the vision and development programme for decommissioning the Lewes and Eastbourne Pupil Referral Units and establishing two Virtual Colleges from September 2009. Report to the scrutiny committee outlining the outcomes achieved since the establishment of the Virtual Colleges and highlighting any impact on additional transport costs | September 2010 |

Distribution list:

Scrutiny committee members

Matt Dunkley

Penny Gaunt

Helen Davies

Hazel Cunningham

Louise Carter

Vicky Stanton

Kate Matthews

Becky Haynes