

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 16 MARCH 2023

10.30 am COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillor Johanna Howell (Chair)
Councillors Sam Adeniji, Charles Clark, Penny di Cara, Chris Dowling,
Kathryn Field, Nuala Geary, Wendy Maples, Stephen Shing, John Ungar
(Vice Chair) and Trevor Webb

Miss Nicola Boulter, Parent Governor Representative
Trevor Cristin, Diocese of Chichester Representative
John Hayling, Parent Governor Representative
Maria Cowler, Roman Catholic Diocese representative

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (*Pages 3 - 8*)
2. Apologies for absence
3. Disclosures of interests
Disclosures by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
4. Urgent items
Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgent.
5. Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report (*Pages 9 - 14*)
Report by the Chairperson of the East Sussex SACRE
6. Armed Forces Covenant (*Pages 15 - 18*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services
7. Work programme (*Pages 19 - 48*)
Report by the Assistant Chief Executive
8. Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) (*Pages 49 - 52*)
Report by the Chief Executive
9. Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4

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Assistant Chief Executive
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8 March 2023

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PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 16 December 2022.

PRESENT: Councillors Sam Adeniji, Penny di Cara, Chris Dowling, Nuala Geary, Johanna Howell (Chair), Wendy Maples, Stephen Shing, John Ungar (Vice Chair) and Ms Maria Cowler (Roman Catholic Diocese Representative) and Mr Trevor Cristin (Diocese of Chichester Representative)

LEAD MEMBERS: Councillor Bob Bowdler, Lead Member for Children and Families
Councillor Bob Standley, Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability (EISEND)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Charles Clark, Kathryn Field and Trevor Webb (by MS Teams)
Mark Stainton, Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Alison Jeffery, Director of Children's Services
Paul Hussey, Assistant Director, Planning, Performance and Engagement
Beth McGhee, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser

26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022

26.1 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 as a correct record and agree the recommendations made at the meeting.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

27.1 Apologies for absence were received from Ms Nicola Boulter and Mr John Hayling, Parent Governor Representatives, and Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health.

27.2 Councillors Charles Clark, Kathryn Field and Trevor Webb were not present in the Council Chamber but joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams. They participated in the debate but did not vote on the items under discussion.

28. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

28.1 There were none.

29. URGENT ITEMS

29.1 There were no urgent items.

30. SCRUTINY REVIEW - USE OF DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

30.1 The Chair of the Review Board, Councillor Penny di Cara, introduced the Review Board's report on the findings and recommendations of the Review. The Review Board was

established by the Committee in July 2022 to look at the Department's plans to encourage more people to use digital and self-service methods when they contact and transact with the Department, and use its services. The Review had looked at the digital services currently in place in ASCH, the extent to which they were used and cultural and behavioural changes that could lead to greater use of them, focusing particularly on the service areas of financial assessments; reviews (especially carer reviews); information, advice and signposting; and carer assessments.

30.2 Overall, the Review Board were impressed by the work underway and the balanced approach the Department was taking to increasing the use of digital and self-service options. While the Department knew there were benefits to increasing digital options, the Review Board was reassured to hear that alternative options and routes for contacting the Department (e.g. via phone or in person) would remain for those who needed them. The Review Board found the Department was adapting and improving its approach to use of digital and technology in response to feedback and consideration of best practice. The Review Board had made recommendations that were practical, built on the good work underway, and were focussed on supporting increased use of the Department's digital offer.

30.3 Councillor Wendy Maples, Member of the Review Board, added that the Review Board had considered both the theory behind, and practical examples of, behavioural change as part of the Review; and that the final recommendation - that the Department explore the benefits of introducing a digital ambassador scheme - was an opportunity for the Department to explore the value of a practical approach to encouraging behaviour change. Councillor Nuala Geary, Member of the Review Board, also commented in support of the work taking place that the Review had heard about. The Review Board thanked all the witnesses for their contributions and officers for all their work on the Review.

30.4 The Chair thanked the Members of the Review Board for their work and the introduction provided. The Committee welcomed the report and, in discussing it, asked questions and made comments on the following areas:

- **Assistance with using digital platforms** – a question was asked on what support (e.g. coaching) was available for users who may be new to, or less familiar with, digital services. The Director of Adult Social Care and Health responded that while it may be possible to incorporate an element of support with using the Council's digital applications into visits to people with care needs who were known to the Council, the Department would also need to look at how it could draw on broader offers for improving digital literacy, including from other services and agencies. The Assistant Director Planning, Performance and Engagement added that the Department would continue to work closely with the One Council Digital Inclusion Programme which undertook a range of work to increase digital inclusion and promote support that improved access to digital services in the County.
- **Language and accessibility** – a question was asked on whether the language used on the ASCH webpages was sufficiently accessible, particularly for people who may be less familiar with technology or for people with English as an additional language. The Chair of the Review Board responded that the Review had considered the role of both language and literacy, and identified that these could be potential barriers to people using digital options. The Director also recognised this but assured the Committee that ASCH's webpages, including the new Cost of Living webpages, were tested on volunteers in the People Bank to ensure the language used was understandable and accessible to residents who did not have expert or technical knowledge.

In terms of translations, the Director responded that there were options and ways to translate information on the ASCH webpages but recognised careful work was needed to ensure the

information remained accurate once translated. It was noted that the accuracy of translation tools had already improved a lot, and could be expected to continue to improve as translation technology itself improved. The Assistant Director added that the Department had a dedicated Equality and Inclusion Team which had good links to ethnic minority communities across East Sussex and ensured that they had the opportunity to shape and inform design of ASCH's work, including its digital offer.

- **Design and usability** – assurance was also sought that expertise on design and usability was sought when designing ASCH's digital tools. The Assistant Director confirmed that resource had been invested by the Department to ensure ASCH's digital offer was designed, from the outset, in a way that was accessible and easy to use. Digital forms and tools were also tested with different groups for usability.
- **Limitations of digitisation** – Members of the Committee felt that there would be some limitations to a 'digital by default' approach, namely in delivery of self/ digital care assessments, and had concerns that not all residents would necessarily be able to self-serve. Members of the Committee therefore felt it was important that alternative routes for contacting and accessing services remained for those who needed them. Councillor Maples, as a Member of the Review Board, assured the Committee that the Board had considered with the Department the limitations to digital services, particularly noting that some demographic groups more likely to require social care (such as people with disabilities or older people) may be limited in their ability to use digital options. As part of this the Review Board had noted that often the people who would be completing ASCH's digital forms and applications would be carers of those requiring social care. For this reason the Review had noted the importance of good, inclusive design for making it as easy, quick and appealing as possible for carers, who already had limited time, to contact and apply for support from ASCH digitally.
- **Support for the Review** – taking account of the comments above, Members of the Committee supported the Review Report and the Department's planned direction of travel.

30.5 The Director thanked the Review Board for their work on this area, as their questioning and challenge had been very useful for helping shape the future work of the Being Digital Programme.

30.6 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the Scrutiny Review report and its recommendations, and to receive six and twelve month monitoring updates on the Review.

31. WORK PROGRAMME

31.1 The Chair of the Committee introduced the report which outlined the Committee's latest work programme, and included a summary of the work of the Loneliness and Resilience Reference Group.

Loneliness and Resilience Reference Group update

31.2 The Chair of the Reference Group, Councillor John Ungar, introduced the summary of the Group's work appended to the report. The Reference Group had been formed to consider a project on loneliness and isolation, which had been led by ESCC Public Health but delivered in partnership with partners across local government, health and the voluntary and community sector, recognising that loneliness and social isolation were complex and systemic social issues that could not be addressed by one agency alone. Collaborate Community Interest Company (CIC), a social consultancy and research organisation, were commissioned to support the project, developing the evidence base and identifying opportunities to mitigate loneliness and its worst effects.

31.3 The Reference Group had met four times across 2021/22 and inputted into the project as it was planned and delivered. The outcome of Collaborate CIC's work was two detailed reports on insights and recommendations for a systems approach to addressing loneliness in the County, which the Reference Group had considered in detail and could be made available to other Members of the Committee on request. At the latest, and final, meeting of the Reference Group it had been confirmed that funding had been allocated to establish a System Stewardship Group, as a first step to responding to the other recommendations of the Collaborate CIC report. This would build on existing partnership work to ensure there was system-wide responsibility to tackle loneliness. ESCC would lead on convening the Stewardship Group on behalf of partners, with focussed planning to establish the Stewardship Group commencing in the new year. An interim evaluation of the Group and its work was planned to take place in December 2023, followed by a final evaluation in December 2024-March 2025. The Reference Group requested an update report back to the March 2024 meeting of the Committee, following the interim evaluation.

31.4 The Chair of the Reference Group welcomed the work that had taken place, noting how positively Public Health had worked to find ways to tackle this issue. The Director of ASCH responded, thanking the Reference Group for its work on what was a very important issue, and which had impacts on people's health and wellbeing and demand for social care. The Director noted that the membership and scope of the Stewardship Group was to be determined when concerted planning got underway in the new year.

31.5 The Committee discussed the update and commented on the following area:

- **Role of poverty** – it was suggested that the role of poverty needed to be considered in this work as people on lower incomes, or facing increased financial pressures from the rising cost of living, would increasingly struggle to take part in paid social activities, such as visiting a café or pub, which could increase social isolation and loneliness. The Director responded that it was correct that the rising cost of living would have impacts on a range of social issues, and on progress tackling issues such as loneliness. The work the Department was planning to commence on establishing new community hubs/networks could help with this by starting to provide some social or gathering space in local communities, which was free.

31.6 The Director of Children's Services added that in the next phase of the work, it was intended that the challenges with loneliness and social isolation facing children and families (including new mothers) would also be considered.

ASC Reforms Reference Group and Market Sustainability Plan

31.7 The Committee agree to update the Committee's work programme to reflect that the work of the ASC Reforms Reference Group should commence closer to the new anticipated implementation date of the reforms of October 2025.

31.8 The Committee also noted that the Market Sustainability Plan would be circulated to the Committee once finalised, but that this was no longer expected to be in February 2023 due to the delay to the planned charging reforms.

Forward Plan

31.9 The Committee considered the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions and agreed there were no issues that required more detailed scrutiny.

31.10 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the latest work programme, subject to:

- an update on progress with the systems loneliness work and Stewardship Group being scheduled for the March 2024 Committee, as requested by the Loneliness and Resilience Reference Group; and

- it being updated to reflect that the work of the ASC Reforms Reference group would commence closer to reform implementation.

The meeting ended at 2.17 pm.

Councillor Johanna Howell (Chair)

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Report to:	People Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	16 March 2023
By:	The Chairperson of the East Sussex SACRE
Title:	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report
Purpose:	To update Members on the role and work of the East Sussex SACRE

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is recommended to comment on and note the work of SACRE in the implementation of the Local Agreed Syllabus, raising the profile and importance of religious education and supporting the high-quality teaching of Religious Education in East Sussex and academies.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This annual report is prepared by East Sussex's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). It provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2022. SACRE advises the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report is a public document sent also to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education (DFE).
- 1.2 For schools, this year has been as demanding as any other. Children and young people in many ways are still recovering from the disruption to their lives. For SACRE too this has brought both challenges and opportunities. Although we have been unable to visit schools, we have strengthened our Subject Network Meetings, and whilst information on school performance has been limited, the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus was extremely successful.
- 1.3 SACRE meetings continue to be well-attended by a committed group of individuals who remain well-informed about the current educational landscape. Broadly, discussions have focused on the quality of the new Agreed Syllabus, the continuity of Collective Worship and how best SACRE can support schools in delivery of their Statutory duties. SACRE has begun a process of ongoing self-evaluation and development planning both of which have become standing items on the agenda.

2 Statutory responsibilities – The Local Agreed Syllabus

- 2.1 The new Agreed Syllabus, 'Faith and Belief in the 21st Century' is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in the county for first teaching from September 2022. It was developed with external advice from RE Today and significant consultation with school and subject leaders, children, young people, and their families. The curriculum also covers a second resource, 'Understanding Christianity', taught by most of our diocesan schools. This has ensured the syllabus has broad appeal.
- 2.2 The new Agreed Syllabus is up to date and relevant, focusing on the major world religions whilst allowing for wider world views and thematic, moral, and ethical questions. Teaching,

learning and assessment centres on three strands: making sense of beliefs; understanding the impact; and making connections. SACRE has facilitated the provision of extensive resources and training. New schemes of work cover Key Stages 1 to 3 whilst a core programme of study for Key Stage 4 has been developed by several teachers, the RE Advisor and external support from RE Today.

- 2.3 A significant programme of professional development has been offered to all schools engaging with the new Agreed Syllabus. Two free launch events were provided covering the new Agreed Syllabus and Understanding Christianity. Attendance to these events allowed delegates to access further free planning materials. 89% of all primary schools and 87% of all secondary schools including academies engaged with the training offer. A small number of Special Schools have also begun engagement with training. Feedback has been very positive about these events.
- 2.4 A 3-year programme of training and development with RE Today is being delivered through the Subject Network Meetings. As a result, these meetings have increased in popularity and, in turn, improved SACRE's ability to support colleagues across the county in especially those with limited subject expertise. Much of this training has been led by experts in their field such as Lat Blaylock. Subject Network Meetings also allow for ongoing feedback from colleagues into further development of the syllabus and training offer.
- 2.5 A recent survey of those that attend such meetings told us that 90% of respondents found the launch events helped with implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus; 80% went on to implement the new Agreed Syllabus; and 90% drew on the training they had been offered. In terms of additional support, respondents requested more shared resources; furthers discussions at Subject Network Meetings; and additional training from RE Today. Subject Network Meetings are offered three times a year as evening twilight. Access to training has improved since a move to online delivery.
- 2.6 The syllabus is under licence for five years for all schools in East Sussex. All costs have been met by SACRE including an initial programme of training and professional development. We are delighted that several primary and secondary academies have also decided to adopt the new Agreed Syllabus.
- 2.7 Monitoring activities, which often includes visits to schools, have been extremely limited but conversely participation with the Subject Network Meetings has increased. On average, we have seen six secondary schools represented at secondary meetings and, on occasion, more than forty primary schools represented. Regular reports are made to SACRE by Network Leads who articulate the strengths and next steps for schools. This has allowed Members to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the needs of schools and tailor future support to meet their needs. It is evident schools truly value Religious Education and are committed to high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- 2.8 Members have been keen to see implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus for themselves but have been mindful about placing additional pressures on schools. Therefore, time has been taken to establish new protocols for school visits that will focus on identifying beacons of good practice and building a system of school-to-school support. School visits will return in spring 2023.
- 2.9 Although candidates returned to sit GCSE and GCSE Religious Studies examinations in Summer 2022, the pandemic unevenly impacted outcomes. Children and young people experienced significant and irregular disruption to their learning. SACRE's use of data was limited due to advice not to compare schools or performance from previous years. Other factors making comparison problematic include examination boards providing candidates with some of the exam content in advance to assist with revision and examiners building in generosity for candidates when setting grade boundaries.

3 Statutory responsibilities – Collective Worship

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of SACRE to monitor schools' statutory responsibility to hold Collective Worship. The pandemic has made it difficult for some schools to maintain an effective programme of Collective Worship. One of SACRE's priorities over the coming year will be to support schools in developing this area of practice.
- 3.2 Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal is available to schools; the RE Advisor is available if further support is needed. SACRE recognises parents' legal right to withdraw but would like to see all children and young people have access to rich and stimulating Collective Worship.
- 3.3 No complaints were made to SACRE during the year about Collective Worship.
- 3.4 There were no requests for a determination to vary statutory requirements. SACRE's Determinations Procedure will be reviewed in March 2023.

4 Links with other organisations

- 4.1 SACRE continues to keep in touch with national events and views. The Chairperson is a former member of the NASACRE Executive and plays an active role in their discussions. He also maintains good links with other national organisations such as the Religious Education Council (REC). The launch of the new Agreed Syllabus has renewed co-operation with the Diocese and Archdiocese.
- 4.2 SACRE Members keep up to date through NASACRE termly briefings and regular attendance to online training. The Chairperson also reports to Members on national, regional, and local issues. Training accessed this year includes: 'How to effectively use pupil and teacher voice in your SACRE', 'SACREs – a way forward' and 'Effective use of self-evaluation'.
- 4.3 The RE Adviser attends south-central meetings to explore good practice from around the region as well as making links with the newly formed RE Regional Hub. She is also an executive member of AREIAC and keeps up to date with national reports and research linked to Religion and Worldviews. SACRE continues to work closely with RE Today on implementing the new Agreed Syllabus.

5 Other areas of work

- 5.1 Free annual training is offered to support governors in their role as well as deepening their understanding of the new Agreed Syllabus. Our last session was held in February 2022 and our next event is planned for later this year. These events provide an opportunity to consult with governors on the new Agreed Syllabus. Take up for these events is positive with typically more than 40 delegates attending from across the county with feedback being 100% good or better.

6 SACRE arrangements

- 6.1 There were three meetings of SACRE during 2022, held in a hybrid format consisting of in-person and online attendance enabling all our meetings to be quorate. Meetings were held:
 - 23rd November 2021 Attendance: 57%
 - 16th March 2022 Attendance: 57%
 - 16th June 2022 Attendance: 57%

An Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was also held on 5th January 2022. Attendance was 63%.

- 6.2 The meeting of 16th March 2022 was the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Roy Galley was reappointed Chairperson and Peter White appointed Vice Chairperson. All meetings are open to the public and minutes are available online. Two Members stepped down over the course of the year.
- 6.3 Representatives of the Diocese of Chichester and the Archdiocese of Arundel regularly attend meetings. We have reasonably wide representation across faiths and from those of no faith. In addition, we have long-serving Unitarian, Bahai and Jewish Members alongside a new Muslim Member. Despite seeking out Buddhist and Ukrainian Orthodox support to strengthen our membership, we have been unable to recruit. SACRE remains mindful of the need to fully represent the diversity of faith and belief in the county. Similarly, Members reflect the range of schools across the county and include diocesan, maintained, academies, and special schools.
- 6.4 SACRE has benefitted from having a different member of the community join each meeting to share their belief through a standing item called 'My World, My Faith'. This allows Members to develop a deeper and more personal understanding of faith and belief in the communities served. Other regular items include feedback from Primary and Secondary Subject Network Meetings as well as the work being undertaken with Special Schools.
- 6.5 The 3-year development plan is regularly updated, and self-evaluation is a standing item. This process has identified several priorities for the year ahead. These include embedding systems for school visits, monitoring and understanding the quality of provision; updating supporting documentation considering the new Agreed Syllabus and improving access for all stakeholders; providing additional support for the delivery of effective Collective Worship; and ensuring SACRE has broad representation reflecting different faiths and beliefs in the county.
- 6.6 Each meeting has a Budget update and closes with consideration of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. Both the SACRE Constitution and Code of Conduct were updated and approved in March 2022 to ensure they reflect and support the work undertaken in the discharge of our statutory duties.
- 6.7 SACRE had a budget of £15,000 for this financial year which has secured specialist advice and support enabling SACRE to fulfil its duties. It also allowed for the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus including costs for licensing and ongoing support including training and resources from RE Today. Funding also supported the growth of Subject Network Meetings. SACRE has also been supported by Children's Services through provision of a Representative alongside high-quality clerking.
- 6.8 It is important that future funding is sufficient to support effective delivery of the new Agreed Syllabus, secure engagement of all schools across the county and build capacity for high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. With such demonstrably high levels of engagement, SACRE would like to continue its support for all schools and academies in meeting their statutory duties.

7 Advice to the Local Authority

- 7.1 SACRE is legally obliged to produce an annual report and it is best practice for this to be considered by the County Council. The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:
- Support SACRE in its ongoing work to seek improvements to Religious Education provision.
 - Where possible, support diverse representation of Members to ensure SACRE reflects the wide range of faith and belief across the county.

Councillor Roy Galley
Chair of SACRE

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Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 16 March 2023

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: East Sussex County Council Armed Forces Report

Purpose: The Committee has asked for a report on the work that has been taking place on the Armed Forces Covenant. This report provides an update on progress made in 2022-2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the content of the update report.

1 Background

1.1 In January 2022, Children's Services took on the role of providing support for the discharge of East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) public sector duty to the Armed Forces Community from Adult Social Care. Oversight of this work is held by Cllr Bob Bowdler, Lead Member for Children and Families and Armed Forces Champion for East Sussex and supported by the Director of Children's Services. The shift took place following the change of responsibility of Armed Forces Champion from Cllr Bill Bentley to Cllr Bob Bowdler.

1.2 The Armed Forces Act enshrined into law a legal obligation for Local Authorities to pay due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when carrying out specific public functions in the areas of housing, healthcare and education. The three core principles of the Covenant are to have due regard for:

- The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces.
- The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership of the armed forces; and
- The principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

1.3 On this basis, the scope of the Armed Forces works for 2022-2023 was agreed and defined as follows:

- To administer and organise the meetings of the East Sussex Civil Military Partnership Board, facilitating joint working between the civilian public sector and the local Armed Forces Community.
- To establish regular Armed Forces District and Borough Champions meetings, with the aim to support District and Boroughs in their statutory duties under the Armed Forces Act in the areas of housing, healthcare and education.
- To work towards submitting an application for Gold Accreditation under the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme for ESCC, demonstrating the Council's continuing commitment to the Armed Forces Community, and the fair and equal treatment of those that have served in the Armed Forces.

1.4 The Armed Forces presence in East Sussex

The Armed Forces Covenant states that the Armed Forces Community includes Regular Personnel, Reservists, Veterans, UK Merchant Seafaring Veterans, families of Regular personnel, Reservists and Veterans, and the immediate family of Service Personnel and veterans who have died, whether or not that death had any connection with the Service.

- 1.5 Regular and Reserve Forces: There are no active Regular Military Bases, and there is one Reservist Base in East Sussex.
- 1.6 Veterans: The Office of National Statistics asked questions on Veteran's status for the first time in the 2021 Census. At the time of the Census, East Sussex was home to 21,173 Veterans / ex-Service personnel (4.6% of usual residents aged 16 or over). This is a higher figure in comparison usual residents in the South East (4.2%), and in England (3.8%). The district with the highest proportion of veterans is Rother (5.3% of the population aged 16 years and over, 4,226). Hastings has the smallest proportion of veterans (3.9% of the population aged 16 years and over, 2,914).
- 1.7 Armed Forces Families: The NHS Armed Forces Network Use Veterans figures for East Sussex to estimate the amount of Immediate family members. In this case, we can expect that there are approximately 42,000 immediate family members of Regular, Reservist and Veterans residing East Sussex. This is likely to be an underestimate. According to the Service Children's Progression Alliance, 67 Schools in East Sussex have at least one Child in attendance. whose parent/ carer is currently serving as a Regular member of the Armed Forces. Further information on Service Children can be found on the SciPy Alliance Website [The SciP Alliance | SCiP Alliance](#)

2 Summary of Progress

Representing East Sussex County Council in External Armed Forces Events / Meetings

- 2.1 As the Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Bowdler has represented East Sussex County Council's commitment to the Armed Forces by engaging in the following events between 2022-2023
- Forces Connect Conference
 - Opening of the Blue Van Veteran's Drop in and RAFA Club
 - Veteran's Lunches
 - Visits to East Sussex Veteran's Hub (ESVH)
 - Sussex Armed Forces Briefing with SE RFCA
 - Forces Connect Member Oversight Group
 - Lord Lieutenant's Award for East Sussex
 - The Veteran's Game
 - Veteran's Breakfasts in Eastbourne
 - The Sovereign's Pass Out Parade, Sandhurst
 - 'Bula Festival: Celebrating the contribution of Fiji to the British Army', Aldershot
 - SE RFCA Annual General Meetings, Crawley and Brighton
 - Visits to Veteran's Hub, Hastings

East Sussex Civil Military Partnership Board

- 2.2 The East Sussex Civil Military Partnership Board (CMPB) meet twice yearly. The CMPB was formed to address countywide issues facing the Armed Forces Community in East Sussex, and to ensure those who are part of the Armed Forces Community are treated fairly. Representation on the board includes members from The British Army, Local Reservist units, Cadet Forces, partners from larger Military Organisations (Reserves Forces and Cadets Association – RFCA, SSAFA: The Armed Forces Charity, The Royal British Legion), the Ministry of Defence, District, Borough and Parish Councils, the Lord Lieutenant's Office and the NHS.
- 2.3 The following meetings have taken place 2022-2023:
- 11 July 2022

- 16 December 2022

2.4 The next meeting is scheduled to take place in June 2023 (date to be confirmed)

Armed Forces District and Borough Council Champions Group

2.5 The implications of the Armed Forces Act (2021) directly impact the work of District and Borough Councils. As such, the Armed Forces District and Borough Champions Group was established by Cllr Bob Bowdler with the support of the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex. The aim of this group is to create space for discussion and collaboration in the duty to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant.

2.6 Meetings of the Champions group have highlighted key areas where additional support is required:

- Training and development opportunities for District and Borough Colleagues
- The creation of an 'Officer's group' to strengthen current Armed Forces work.

2.7 The following meetings have taken place 2022-2023:

- 13 June 2022
- 28 September 2022

2.8 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on the 24 March 2023.

Training and Development

2.9 To enhance understanding and appreciation of the issues facing the Armed Forces Community, a bespoke training offer was designed and delivered. Staff at ESCC have been provided the opportunity to engage in three different levels of training:

- A department specific Armed Forces Awareness training, delivered by colleagues from the NHS Armed Forces Network
- The 'Armed Forces Covenant for Frontline Staff' e-learning module, designed by Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership
- Service Champions Training, delivered by colleagues from the NHS Armed Forces Network

2.10 The training offer was launched in October 2022, and so far over 50 members of staff have engaged in training.

2.11 Elected Members were invited to attend 'Armed Forces Covenant Training for Members and Covenant Leads' in October 2022. This session was attended by 12 Elected Members.

'Going for Gold': Defence Employers Recognition Scheme

2.12 In June 2022, the Corporate Management Team agreed to submit an application for Gold Accreditation under the Defence Employment Recognition Scheme, following on from receiving Silver Accreditation in 2018. ESCC will be submitting its nomination in March 2023. To support with this work, ESCC is receiving mentorship from the South East Regional Employment Engagement Manager (Ministry of Defence) and from the Director for NHS Armed Forces Network for Sussex.

2.13 ESCC's application for Gold Accreditation will focus on the following areas:

2.14 HR: Employment, recruitment, retention of AFC

- ESCC offer a guaranteed interview scheme for members of the Armed Forces Community who meet the essential criteria.
- ESCC have connected with the Career Transition Partnership and Forces Families Jobs to support the Armed Forces Community in careers outside of the military.

- ESCC support Veterans / ex-service people through the employment process through 1-1 coaching, CV and application support, job matching in the council and interview preparations.

2.15 Supporting our Clients, Customers and Service Users

- ESCC have included questions asking about whether a person is part of the Armed Forces Community as part of their Equality Monitoring forms – so that services can ensure that the Armed Forces community don't face disadvantage when accessing services.
- ESCC offer three levels of training for staff to understand and support members of the Armed Forces Community in their work, including training specific Armed Forces Service Champions.

2.16 Advocacy and Peer Support

- ESCC are supporting District and Boroughs through the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme system, hosting Armed Forces D&B Champions groups.
- ESCC have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and will be engaging with the East Sussex Strategic Partnership to encourage partners to write their own bespoke pledges.

2.17 Supporting our Armed Forces Community at ESCC

- ESCC have policies that support Reservists, with up to 18 days paid leave available for training and development.
- Flexible working arrangements are available for Armed Forces spouses, partners and families to support changes in their working lives due to their military link, as well as Adult Cadet Volunteers to support their voluntary roles.

3. **Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

- 3.1 The People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the content of the update report.

Alison Jeffery
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Abigail Funnell
 Tel. No. 07821636103
 Email: Abigail.funnell@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

ALL

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Report to:	People Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	16 March 2023
By:	Assistant Chief Executive
Title:	People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
Purpose:	To review and discuss the People Scrutiny Committee's future work programme

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) review and agree the latest work programme set out at Appendix 1;**
 - 2) accept the recommendations of the recent Scoping Board to progress with a scrutiny review of school exclusions (as set out at paragraphs 2.4-2.5) and agree the proposed Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 2;**
 - 3) appoint Members to the School Exclusions Review Board and agree the Chair of the Review Board;**
 - 4) agree that the Prevention in Children's Services Scrutiny Review is converted to a Reference Group (as set out in paragraphs 2.9-2.12);**
 - 5) review upcoming items on East Sussex County Council's Forward Plan as set out at Appendix 4 to identify any issues that may require more detailed scrutiny.**
-

1 Background

1.1 The work programme is an important tool in ensuring the correct focus and best use of the Committee's time in scrutinising topics that are of importance to the residents of East Sussex, and the efficient and effective working of the Council. It also provides clarity for those who may be requested to give evidence to the Committee on the issues under review, and the questions the Committee requires answers to.

1.2 Discussion of the work programme provides the Committee with the opportunity to consider topics that it may be of value to scrutinise, and to decide whether further scoping work is required. This provides a basis for deciding the best way of scrutinising a topic, the timescale, and who from the Committee will be involved in carrying out the review work. If there are a number of potential topics for review, Members can determine the priority of the work within the resources available to the Committee.

2 Supporting information

Work programme

2.1 The Committee's latest work programme is attached at Appendix 1, incorporating a number of updates including those outlined below. The Committee is asked to consider, discuss and agree the work programme, subject to any further changes required.

Scrutiny Reviews

Adult Social Care Equality and Inclusion

2.2 The review into Adult Social Care Equality and Inclusion is underway. An initial meeting to consider the areas set out in the agreed TOR and to plan for further evidence gathering took place on the 28 February.

2.3 The Board has agreed a planned timeline to report to the Committee in July 2023 which is reflected in the attached work programme.

School Exclusions

2.4 Following the pause in the review due to the Covid 19 pandemic, a second Scoping Board meeting took place in January 2023 to consider the latest position and progress with work across the local education system to prevent the use of school exclusions. The Scoping Board has recommended the Committee should proceed with re-starting this scrutiny review to consider preventative strategies, the role of early help, appropriate responses to a child at risk of exclusion, the role of governors and clarity of messaging.

2.5 It is recommended that the Committee undertakes a scrutiny review of this area with the aim of reporting to the committee in November 2023. The proposed Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 2 for the Committee's approval.

2.6 The Committee is also asked to agree the membership and Chair of this Review Board.

School Attendance

2.7 A Scoping Board meeting took place in 2022 and the Board agreed that, although the subject was appropriate for a Scrutiny Review, as so much of the current situation regarding school absence rates in East Sussex was related to the ongoing impact of, and disruption from, the coronavirus pandemic, it was too early for the Committee to undertake a scrutiny review of school attendance.

2.8 The Board agreed that the review should commence in 2023 when we expect to have a clearer sense of the long-term impact of Covid on school absences. A further short Scoping Board meeting will be held in 2023 to build on issues discussed at the 2022 Scoping Board and draft Terms of Reference for this review. Due to potential overlaps with areas to be explored by the School Exclusions review, it is planned for this review to commence in the autumn of 2023.

Prevention in Children's Services

2.9 The Committee agreed at its March 2022 meeting that it was interested in undertaking a scrutiny review of the role of prevention in Children's Services and agreed to appoint an initial Scoping Board to consider the topic.

2.10 At the Scoping Board meeting in July 2022 the Board concluded, based on the discussion with officers, that there were areas within preventative/early intervention approaches that could benefit from closer examination and challenge by scrutiny.

2.11 The first Review Board meeting took place on 5 January 2023 and received an update from officers on work being undertaken to strengthen prevention in Children's Services. The Review Board concluded that, as work on key projects and programmes was clearly under development and progressing at pace, the issue would be better considered by People Scrutiny through a Reference Group which could provide regular and timely scrutiny input. This would enable scrutiny to be more effective and impactful and provide ongoing constructive challenge.

2.12 In line with the recommendation of the Board, the Committee is asked to agree that this review is converted to a Reference Group.

2.13 The Board also recommended that a Quality Demand Reduction Diagram shared at the meeting, was shared with the committee for information. The Diagram is attached as Appendix 3 for information.

2.14 Any suggestions for potential Scrutiny Review topics should be discussed with the Chair, or the Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser, in advance of the Committee meetings.

Reference Groups

Health and Social Care Integration Programme (HASCIP) Reference Group

2.15 The group last met on 22 November 2022 to consider and comment on key elements of the draft Sussex Integrated Care Strategy ahead of it being considered by the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development.

2.16 Following final approval of the strategy by the Sussex Health and Care Assembly in December 2022, the next step is the development of a delivery plan setting out how the strategy will be implemented. A further meeting of the Reference Group will be arranged for late May/June 2023 to review and comment on the draft delivery plan ahead of consideration by Lead Member.

Educational Attainment and Performance Scrutiny Reference Group

2.17 The Educational Attainment and Performance Scrutiny Reference Group meets on an annual basis to focus on reviewing data on educational attainment in East Sussex and related issues.

2.18 The group met on the 7 March 2023 to discuss 2021/22 attainment results. The group discussed the key priorities for East Sussex and current measures that are in place to address ongoing challenges.

Reports for Information

Market Sustainability Plan

2.19 At its September 2022 meeting the Committee asked to receive a copy of the Adult Social Care Market Sustainability Plan once it was finalised. The plan was circulated to the committee ahead of agreement by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health on 2 March 2023.

Adult Social Care Strategy

2.20 The new Adult Social Care Strategy will be reported to Cabinet in the summer. A proposed briefing for scrutiny committee Members on the strategy in advance of this has been added to the work programme for agreement by the committee.

Forward Plan

2.21 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 is included at Appendix 4. The Committee is requested to review the forthcoming items on the Forward Plan to identify any issues within the remit of this Committee that may require more detailed scrutiny. The Forward Plan is revised and published on a monthly basis and Committee members should regularly review the Forward Plan.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 An important part of managing the work of the People Scrutiny Committee is regularly reviewing its future work programme. This involves the Committee assessing its priorities, ensuring its ongoing reviews are completed in a timely fashion and identifying new areas for scrutiny.

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser

Tel. No. 07561267461

Email: rachel.sweeney@eastsussex.gov.uk

People Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme

Current Scrutiny Reviews		
Title of Review	Detail	Proposed Completion Date
ASC Equality and Inclusion	<p>The Committee has accepted the recommendation of the Initial Scoping Board that the Committee proceed with a review of this area, looking at how the Department engages with 'seldom heard' groups and whether residents of all backgrounds know how to access ASC services.</p> <p>Membership of the Review Board: Councillors di Cara, Geary, Ungar (Chair) and Webb.</p>	July 2023
School Exclusions	<p>The previous Committee agreed in March 2020 to undertake a Scrutiny Review of issues relating to school exclusions. The Committee also agreed the Terms of Reference proposed by the Initial Scoping Board. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the availability of schools to contribute to further work on this review, it was subsequently paused with the intention to recommence it at a suitable future date.</p> <p>Following the pause in the Review, a second Scoping Board meeting took place in January 2023 to consider the latest position and progress with work across the local education system to prevent use of school exclusions. The Scoping Board has recommended the Committee should proceed with re-starting this scrutiny review to consider preventative strategies, the role of early help, appropriate responses to a child at risk of exclusion, the role of governors and clarity of messaging.</p> <p>Membership of the Scoping Board Board: Councillors Adeniji, Field, Howell, Maples and Nicola Boulter, Parent Governor Representative. John Hayling?</p> <p>Membership of the Review Board to be confirmed.</p>	November 2023
Initial Scoping Reviews		
Subject area for initial scoping	Detail	Proposed Dates
School Attendance	<p>The Committee heard at their 2021 work planning awayday that overall school absence and persistent absence rates across East Sussex are high, when compared to national and statistical neighbours; and that East Sussex has a significant number of children and young people deemed too ill to attend school due to anxiety and poor mental health, and increasing levels of Emotionally-Based School Avoidance.</p>	To be confirmed following a further short scoping board in 2023.

	<p>A scoping board meeting was held on 10 March 2022 and the Board agreed that although the subject was appropriate for a Scrutiny Review, as so much of the current situation regarding school absence rates in East Sussex was related to the ongoing impact of, and disruption from, the coronavirus pandemic, it was too early for the Committee to undertake a scrutiny review of school attendance.</p> <p>The Board therefore agreed that the review should commence in 2023 when we expect to have a clearer sense of the long-term impact of COVID on school absences. A further short scoping board meeting will be held in 2023 to build on issues discussed at the 2022 scoping board and draft Terms of Reference for this review.</p> <p>Membership of the Scoping Board: Cllrs Adeniji, di Cara, Field and Howell (Chair) and Nicola Boulter, Parent Governor Representative.</p>	
Suggested Potential Future Scrutiny Review Topics		
Suggested Topic	Detail	
Scrutiny Reference Groups		
Reference Group Title	Subject area	Meeting Dates
Prevention in Children's Services	<p>Subject to agreement at the March 2023 Committee, the previously agreed Scrutiny Review of Use of Prevention in Children's Services is recommended by the Review Board to be converted to a reference group to enable more effective, impactful and timely scrutiny of the topic. The reference group will consider and provide input to work underway (e.g. through the Family Hubs Programme) to strengthen use of prevention in Children's Services.</p> <p>Membership of the Reference Group (TBC): Councillors Adeniji, Field, Howell (Chair) and John Hayling, Parent Governor Representative.</p>	Next meeting: To be confirmed
Health and Social Care Integration Programme (HASCIP) Reference Group	<p>The Committee agreed to establish a Reference Group to monitor progress of the East Sussex Health and Social Care Integration Programme and identify areas for future scrutiny. It will review HASCIP progress reports provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board and meet on an ad hoc basis as required to consider issues arising in more detail.</p> <p>The group last met on 22 November 2022 to consider and comment on key elements of the draft Sussex Integrated Care Strategy ahead of it being considered by the Lead</p>	Next meeting: Expected June 2023

	<p>Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development. It was agreed at this meeting that the Strategy's action plan would be presented to a future HASCIP Reference Group meeting, expected to be in June 2023.</p> <p>The group has also requested to consider progress with work at the locality level in East Sussex and a meeting to consider this is expected to take place in 2023 when this work is further progressed.</p> <p>Membership of the group: Councillors Clark, di Cara, Geary (Chair), Ungar and Webb.</p>	
Educational Attainment and Performance Scrutiny Reference Group	<p>The Committee agreed in June 2018 to establish a Reference Group to focus on reviewing data on educational attainment in East Sussex and related issues. The group meets on an annual basis.</p> <p>The Group met on the 7 March 2023 to review the attainment data is for the 2021/22 academic year.</p> <p>Membership of the group: Councillors Adeniji, Field (Chair) and Howell and Nicola Boulter, Parent Governor Representative.</p>	Next meeting: 2024
Adult Social Care reforms Reference Group	<p>The Committee agreed at its 2022 work planning awayday to establish a reference group to consider the impact and implementation of the national Adult Social Care reforms. Implementation of the reforms was subsequently delayed in the 2022 Autumn Statement from October 2023 to October 2025 and the first meeting of the Group will take place closer to implementation.</p> <p>Membership of the group: Councillors di Cara, Geary and Ungar.</p>	First meeting: closer to implementation of the reforms in Oct 2025
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) Board	RPPR Board meets annually to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the emerging portfolio plans and spending and savings proposals to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the scrutiny committee.	Next meeting: December 2023
Reports for Information		
Subject Area	Detail	Proposed Date
Market Sustainability Plan	At its September 2022 meeting the Committee asked to receive a copy of the Market Sustainability Plan once it was finalised. The report was circulated to the Committee on 22 February 2023.	Complete

Training and Development		
Title of Training/Briefing	Detail	Proposed Date
Questioning Skills	A session to look at making a difference through effective questioning.	21 March 2023
Future Committee Agenda Items		Author
17 July 2023		
Implementation of Schools White Paper Reforms	The Committee requested at its July 2022 meeting an update in 12 months on progress with implementing reforms set out in the Schools White Paper.	Assistant Director, Education
Elective Home Education	The Committee requested at its November 2022 meeting an update in 6 months on the work of the Elective Home Education service.	Assistant Director, Education
Use of Digital and Technology in Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Review	6 month monitoring report on progress with the Review's recommendations.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Committee Work Programme	To manage the Committee's programme of work including matters relating to ongoing reviews, initial scoping boards, future scrutiny topics, reference groups, training and development matters and reports for information.	Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)	To commence the Committee's involvement with the RPPR process for 2024/25 financial year by reviewing the information in the Quarter 4 (end of year) (2022/23) Council Monitoring report and the 2023 State of the County report.	Becky Shaw, Chief Executive
25 September 2023		
Committee Work Programme	To manage the Committee's programme of work including matters relating to ongoing reviews, initial scoping boards, future scrutiny topics, reference groups, training and development matters and reports for information.	Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)	To continue the Committee's work on the RPPR process for 2024/25 financial year.	Becky Shaw, Chief Executive
Safeguarding Adults Board - Annual Report	The Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report outlines the safeguarding activity and performance in East Sussex during the previous financial year, as well as some of the main developments in place to prevent abuse from occurring.	Chair, Safeguarding Adults Board

Annual Review of Safer Communities	To update the Committee on performance in relation to Safer Communities in 2022/23 and the priorities and issues for 2023/24 that are highlighted in the Partnership Business Plan.	Assistant Director - Planning, Performance and Engagement
East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP) Annual Report	<p>Presentation of the annual report of the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership.</p> <p>This report will include a progress update on the work of multi-agency exploitation coordinators as requested at the March 2022 Committee.</p>	Independent Chair, East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership
13 November 2023		
Committee Work Programme	To manage the Committee's programme of work including matters relating to ongoing reviews, initial scoping boards, future scrutiny topics, reference groups, training and development matters and reports for information.	Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)	To continue the Committee's work on the RPPR process for 2024/25 financial year.	Becky Shaw, Chief Executive
March 2024		
Loneliness Stewardship Group	The Committee agreed at its December 2022 meeting to request an update on progress with partnership work to address loneliness, particularly on the work of the Stewardship Group established following the conclusion of the 'Community Wellbeing: Connected People and Places' Project.	Assistant Director – Planning, Performance and Engagement
Use of Digital and Technology in Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Review	12 month monitoring report on progress with the Review's recommendations.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health

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Scrutiny Review Terms of Reference Document

Scrutiny Review	Scrutiny Review of School Exclusions
Responsible Committee	People Scrutiny Committee
Author	Beth McGhee
Version	2.0
Date	31.01.23

1 Background

1.1 At its meeting in June 2019 the People Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish an Initial Scoping Board to explore the merits of undertaking a scrutiny review of issues relating to school exclusions. Members heard evidence that East Sussex was an outlier in terms of the proportion of pupils who were excluded from school. This was with regard to both fixed term exclusions (FTE) and Permanent Exclusions (PEX).

1.2 The Scoping Board subsequently met on 24 February 2020 and based on the written and verbal evidence provided to it by the Children's Services Department, it agreed to recommend that a scrutiny review of issues relating to the rates of school exclusion in East Sussex should proceed. In reaching this conclusion, the Board noted a range of evidence which included:

- that East Sussex had higher than average rates of both FTE and PEX.
- that reducing the number of exclusions is a key target for the County Council.
- the detrimental and long-term impact that exclusion often has on the individual concerned.
- the disproportionate numbers of vulnerable children and young people who are subject to exclusion. Children in this group include those in receipt of free school meals and those who have special educational needs.
- the impact of part-timetables where they are used as a form of unofficial exclusion.

1.3 As with any scoping exercise, the Scoping Board not only had to determine whether there are significant issues which are not being addressed, it also had to carefully consider the likelihood of a potential review delivering realistic recommendations that are within the power of the Council to take forward. With this in mind, the Board carefully considered a number of limiting factors, including that the decision to exclude is a school one and that academies are wholly outside of the remit of the local authority (LA).

1.4 However, whilst acknowledging the above limits, the Board were informed that the LA retains important responsibilities, including:

- a duty to ensure a permanently excluded child is provided full-time education within the 6th day of the exclusion decision being taken;

- ensuring that children with SEN are identified in a timely manner and have their needs met appropriately, especially if they have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs); and more generally
- as a provider of advice and guidance and a facilitator of partnership working with and between schools.

1.5 In this context the Board concluded that there was scope to develop effective recommendations around the following areas:

- the status and role of the Governing Board with regard to the school's approach to managing poor behaviour issues and the exclusion process.
- the status and role of the SENCO and other specialist support available to schools;
- strategies, such as therapeutic thinking, which help promote a preventative approach.

1.6 Delivery of the Review was subsequently paused due to the coronavirus pandemic and the limitations this placed on the capacity of the Children's Services Department, schools and school leaders to engage with the Review. In light of the pause in progressing the Review, a further Scoping Board was held in on 12 January 2023 to consider the latest position for school exclusions in East Sussex; whether it still remained valuable and appropriate for the Committee to proceed with a Review of this area, and if so, if the previously agreed Terms of Reference remained relevant.

1.7 At the January 2023 meeting the Scoping Board received an update on:

- the latest data for school exclusions – which noted that while there had been an improvement in county-level data for **permanent exclusions** with a reduction in the rate of permanent exclusions for all schools combined (primary, secondary and special) to below the national average, **suspension rates** (previously called fixed term exclusions) for all schools combined remained above the national average.
- current concerns – including that vulnerable pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and eligible for Free School Meals, remained more likely to be suspended than their peers; and that there had been an increasing number of decisions to exclude very young children at primary phase.
- the range of work the Council was undertaking with education, health and care partners to reduce use of exclusions and limitations to this.

1.8 Informed by the evidence presented, and a discussion with officers about the relevance of the previously agreed lines of enquiry, the Scoping Board agreed the topic remained appropriate for a scrutiny review, with updates to the scope reflected below.

2 Scope of the Review

2.1 Given the above, and with particular regard to the needs of vulnerable children, the January 2023 Scoping Board agreed to recommend the following lines of enquiry:

- 1) Could the Council do more to develop levels of understanding amongst school leaders of **preventative** strategies, such as therapeutic thinking, to help reduce the likelihood of exclusion?
- 2) Could the Council do more to join up **early help** and education services as a preventative approach to support reduction in school exclusions?
- 3) Could the Council do more to help develop a better understanding amongst schools of what constitutes an appropriate **response** to a child who is at risk of exclusion? This line of enquiry to include consideration of:
 - the role and status of the SENCO and their involvement in developing appropriate responses to a child who is at risk of exclusion;
 - appropriate responses to very young pupils at risk of exclusion in primary school; and
 - appropriate responses to vulnerable pupils at risk of exclusion at secondary phase.
- 4) Could the Council develop its training and advice for governors around, for example, providing effective **challenge** in the circumstance where a Head teacher has taken a decision to exclude and the Governing Board are required to consider reinstatement. This line of enquiry could also explore the role of Governors in helping to develop best practice at the school.
- 5) Within consideration of each of the above lines of enquiry, is the Council's **messaging** clear on the need to reduce, and benefits of reducing, school exclusions?

2.2 The Review will be based on the following **principles**:

- It will be forward looking and exploratory
- It will focus on what can be done locally in East Sussex (as opposed to changes requiring national action)
- It will focus on the specific role of the Council, what is within the Council's sphere of influence and what can be achieved within available resources

2.3 The Review will have a focus on what can be done to help reduce the levels of school exclusion in East Sussex and will have particular regard to vulnerable children and young people (as this group are disproportionately at risk of exclusion).

3 Review methods

3.1 It is anticipated that the Review Board will consider documentary evidence, question witnesses and undertake research in order to gather evidence to inform its recommendations. The review will draw on information already gathered at the scoping stage.

3.2 The following list is not exhaustive and will change and develop as the review progresses. As part of the review the Board members will:

- Speak to a range of witnesses, for example:

- School leaders
 - Governing Board members
 - SENCOs and or other professionals, such as teaching assistants, who have a role in supporting vulnerable children and young people
 - Staff working in early help and social care, including the Head of the Virtual School
- Review a range of documentary evidence, for example:
 - National and regional evidence with regard to school exclusion and related matters
 - Findings from engagement with representatives of local schools

4 Review Organisation and Responsibilities

4.1 Initial Scoping Board

The January 2023 scoping for this review was undertaken by Councillors Sam Adeniji (Chair), Kathryn Field, Johanna Howell and Wendy Maples.

4.2 Review Board

- The Review Board is: *to be appointed by the Committee*
- The Chair of the Review Board is: *to be appointed by the Committee*

4.3 The Review Board is responsible for:

- Making decisions regarding the scope and direction of the review;
- Monitoring and control of the overall progress of the review;
- Agreeing where Board members will undertake evidence gathering activities as required by the review;
- Considering and providing challenge to all evidence presented to it; and
- Developing and agreeing the final report, including the findings and recommendations of the review.

4.4 Scrutiny Review Support

Support for the review will be provided by the Policy Team to:

- Manage the review process;
- Undertake research as agreed by the Board;
- Draft the final report

The Lead Officer who will support the review from the Policy Team is Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser. Their role is to manage the review, ensuring its aims and objectives are met and that the final report is delivered to the People Scrutiny Committee within the agreed timescales.

5 Scrutiny Review Completion

5.1 When the review has been completed the Lead Officer will co-ordinate the production of a final report outlining the findings and recommendations for agreement by the Review Board. Once agreed, the Review Board will present this to the People Scrutiny Committee for it to agree the recommendations.

5.2 The report will then be presented to Cabinet for comment and County Council for approval. Progress updates on how the recommendations are being implemented by the department will be presented to the People Scrutiny Committee in due course (usually six and twelve months after the review has been approved by County Council).

6 Review Timetable

Based on the initial scoping of the review, the Review Board aims to submit the final report to the People Scrutiny Committee at the meeting to be held on 13 November 2023.

An initial timetable of the meetings and activities required to complete the review is outlined below. *[The number of review board meetings is not fixed and there can be more or less depending on the nature of the review. The Review Board will agree the number and content of the meetings and review activity].*

Activity	Timescale/Date
<u>Initial Review Board Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider lines of enquiry/terms of reference • Review evidence gathered at scoping stage • Agree further evidence gathering requirements 	April 2023
<u>Review Board Activity/Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathering 	May
<u>Review Board Activity/Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathering 	June
<u>Review Board Activity/Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathering 	July
<u>Review Board Activity/Meeting (if required)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathering 	September
Draft scrutiny review report and findings and recommendations of the review	September - October
<u>Final Review Board Meeting to agree Report</u> Review Board meeting to agree draft report, findings and recommendations with input from key officers.	October

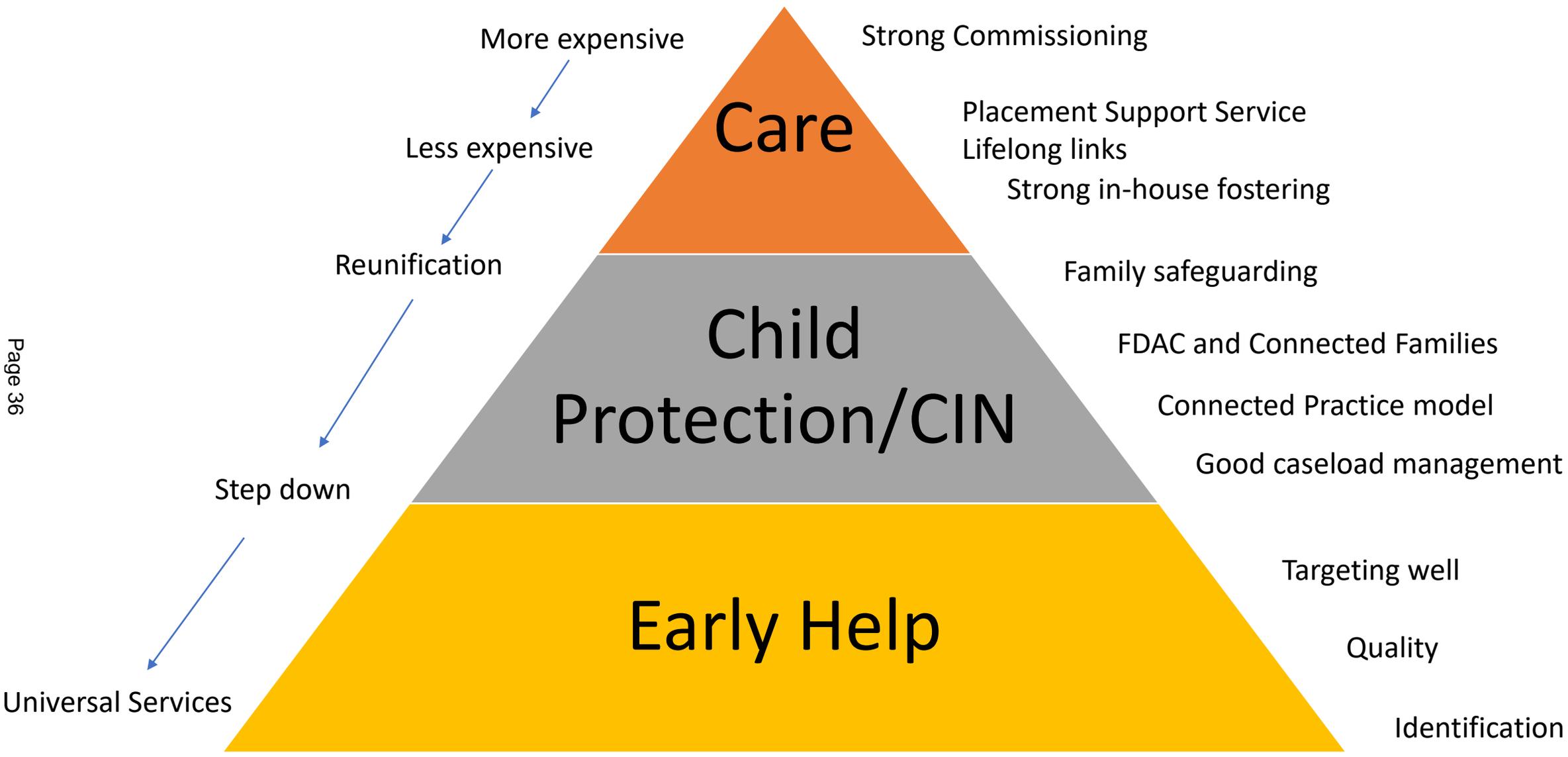
Deadline for Report Dispatch	3 November 2023
<u>Report to People Scrutiny Committee for agreement</u>	13 November 2023
Report to Cabinet	12 December 2023
Report to Council	6 February 2024

Prevention, cost avoidance and quality in Children's Services

- The “pyramid” diagram overleaf sets out a broad approach in East Sussex both to prevent problems for children, young people and families and in doing so to reduce the cost of children's services to the county council
- The quality of services at all levels is critical to prevention and cost avoidance. The way for children's services to be financially sustainable is to ensure that they are of high quality, focussed on supporting and challenging families to improve their lives, and providing high quality support for children and young people who need care outside their family.
- The pyramid itself sets out three broad categories of need for children: early help, child protection/child in need and children who need alternative care. The left hand side sets out the objective of the service from ensuring affordable care, to reunifying children with families, to stepping children down to universal services. The right hand side lists the different services and strategies through which we try to achieve those objectives.
- There is no “choice” between good outcomes for children and affordability for the council: in fact affordability is ensured through quality services and good outcomes.

Prevention, cost avoidance and quality

Page 36



EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN

The Leader of the County Council is required to publish a forward plan setting out matters which the Leader believes will be the subject of a key decision by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet member or officer in the period covered by the Plan (the subsequent four months). The Council's Constitution states that a key decision is one that involves

- (a) expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the expenditure of the County Council's budget, namely above £500,000 per annum; or
- (b) is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions.

As a matter of good practice, the Council's Forward Plan includes other items in addition to key decisions that are to be considered by the Cabinet/individual members. This additional information is provided to inform local residents of all matters to be considered, with the exception of issues which are dealt with under the urgency provisions. Only key decisions to be taken by officers are included.

For each decision included on the Plan the following information is provided:

- Page 37
- the name of the individual or body that is to make the decision and the date of the meeting or relevant time period for an officer decision
 - the title of the report and decision to be considered
 - groups that will be consulted prior to the decision being taken
 - a list of documents that will be considered when making the decision
 - the name and telephone number of the contact officer for each item.

The Plan is updated and published every month on the Council's website two weeks before the start of the period to be covered.

Meetings of the Cabinet/individual members are open to the public (with the exception of discussion regarding reports which contain exempt/confidential information). Copies of agenda and reports for meetings are available on the website in advance of meetings. Key decisions taken by officers will not be taken at a meeting – documents listed can be made available on request to the contact officer, with the exception of those which contain exempt/confidential information.

For further details on the time of meetings and general information about the Plan please contact Stuart McKeown at County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE, or telephone 01273 481583 or send an e-mail to stuart.mckeown@eastsussex.gov.uk. For further detailed information regarding specific issues to be considered by the Cabinet, individual Member or officer please contact the named contact officer for the item concerned.

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE

For copies of reports or other documents please contact the officer listed on the Plan or phone 01273 335274.

FORWARD PLAN – EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (including Key Decisions) –1 March 2023 TO 30 June 2023

Additional notices in relation to Key Decisions and/or private decisions are available on the [Council's website](#).

Cabinet membership:

- Councillor Keith Glazier - Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development
- Councillor Nick Bennett – Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change
- Councillor Rupert Simmons – Lead Member for Economy
- Councillor Claire Dowling – Lead Member for Transport and Environment
- Councillor Carl Maynard – Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health
- Councillor Bob Bowdler – Lead Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Bob Standley – Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability

Date for Decision	Decision Taker	Decision/Key Issue	Decision to be taken wholly or partly in private (P) or Key Decision (KD)	Consultation	List of Documents to be submitted to decision maker	Contact Officer
2 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Market Sustainability Plan Department of Health and Social Care requires local authorities with responsibility for Adult Social Care services to submit a Market Sustainability Plan. The Lead Member is asked to approve the draft Market Sustainability Plan for East Sussex County Council.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Samantha Williams 01273 482115
2 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Adult Social Care	Household Support Fund 2023 This is a key decision due to the value of			Report, other documents may	Paul Rideout 01273 482911

	and Health	the grant the local authority will receive.	KD		also be submitted	
6 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act ('RIPA') and Investigative Powers Act ('IPA') update Set the policy for the year ahead as required by the Policy in relation to the use of covert investigative techniques.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Robert Freeman 01273 336715
7 Mar 2023	Cabinet	Transport for the South East - final Strategic Investment Plan Following consultation on the draft SIP in summer 2022, the amended final SIP was approved by TfSE's Board in November 2022 As a constituent authority of Transport for the South East, it is imperative that we seek Cabinet's approval of the Strategic Investment Plan to ensure that the final document (currently programmed for publication in March 2023) includes the transport investment priorities for East Sussex for the period up to 2050.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Jon Wheeler 01273 482212
7 Mar 2023	Cabinet	Council Monitoring: Quarter 3 2022/2023 To consider the Council Monitoring report for the third quarter of the financial year 2022/23 as part of the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Victoria Beard 07894 708914
13 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	Petition: To create a safe crossing on Sutton Avenue to access South Coast Road and Dell Park			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Kelly Burr 01273 482824

		To decide a response to a petition to create a safe crossing on Sutton Avenue to access South Coast Road and Dell Park. Petitioners have requested formal pedestrian crossings in the vicinity of the Sutton Avenue and A259 South Coast Road roundabout, Peacehaven. Exact locations have not been specified although the Lead Petitioner has suggested consideration of crossings on the A259 South Coast Road, between Lincoln Avenue and Dorothy Avenue. The petition objective is to improve safer crossings and therefore access for pedestrians to the Dell and the shops on South Coast Road.				
13 Mar 2023 Page 40	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	Capital Programme for Transport Improvements 2023/24 To seek Lead Member approval, following consultation with local members, of the list of transport schemes and associated expenditure included in the programme for design and/or delivery in 2023/24.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Andrew Keer, Chris Tree 01273 336682, 01273 482247
28 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability	Proposed Specialist facility at Denton Community Primary School To consider the outcome of a consultation to establish a specialist facility at Denton Community Primary School, and, if appropriate, to seek approval to publish a statutory notice.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Gary Langford 01273 481758
28 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs	Proposed Specialist facility at Meridian Community Primary School To consider the outcome of a consultation to establish a specialist facility at Meridian			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Gary Langford 01273 481758

	and Disability	Community Primary School, and, if appropriate, to seek approval to publish a statutory notice.				
28 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability	Approval to publish statutory notice for lowering school age range at Punnets Town Community Primary School To seek Lead Member approval to publish statutory notices in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at Punnets Town Community Primary School to enable the governing body to take over the management of the voluntary run early years provision currently on the school site.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Jane Spice 01323 747425
31 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change	Exceat Bridge Improvement Scheme land acquisition and compensation Various parcels of land subject to acquisition and/or compensation in connection with the Exceat Bridge Improvement scheme.	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Zoe Tweed 07701 021868
31 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change	Write-off of Debts 2022/23 To seek Lead Member approval for writing off certain debts in excess of £10,000.	P		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Alina Dunn 01273 481250
31 Mar 2023	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change	Telephony Services procurement Approval to proceed with a joint procurement with Brighton and Hove City Council, and Surrey County Council for: a Call Plan (the main telephone service), a replacement Contact Centre telephony solution (including licences), implementation services (specialist knowledge and	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Matt Scott 07552 286752

		expertise) and Microsoft Teams telephony licences (enabling the dial pad and unified comms experience to be added to the existing Teams interface). With delegated authority given to the Chief Operating Officer to award.				
March 2023	Director of Communities, Economy and Transport	BSIP Bus Stop Infrastructure Improvements, Key Interchanges & Mobility Hubs Provision of new or replacement shelters (and associated works), maintenance, and refurbishment of ESCC public transport infrastructure, predominantly bus shelters, bus stop hardstands, bus stop poles and flags. Works required to support the delivery of the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Craig Lamberton 01273 337525
March 2023	Chief Operating Officer	Decarbonisation of Heat Works at Rotherfield Primary School Decision to award a contract for replacement and upgrades to the heating system, lighting and building fabric improvement works, following tendering, which based on consultant pre-tender estimate will exceed £500k. These works will reduce heat loss, energy use and carbon emissions and achieve a transition from the existing fossil fuel boiler heating system to clean low carbon air source heat pumps in line with our net zero commitment. An application for a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3b grant has been made, to meet part of the costs of	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Nigel Brown 07394 410630

		the works, with a decision to award anticipated by 31 March 2023.				
March 2023	Chief Operating Officer	Heating and Ventilation Improvements at Rocks Park Primary School, Uckfield Decision to award a contract for the package of works following tendering, which based on consultant pre-tender estimate will exceed £500k. These works will reduce ventilation heat loss and enable a transition from the existing fossil fuel boiler heating system to clean low carbon heat pumps in line with our net zero commitment and in order to qualify for a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3b grant. An application for a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3b grant has been made, to meet part of the costs of the works, with a decision to award anticipated by 31 March 2023.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Nigel Brown 07394 410630
4 Apr 2023	Director of Adult Social Care and Health	Future Technology Enabled Care (TEC) service provision Contract Award To make the contract award for Future Technology Enabled Care service provision to allow the new contract to commence on 1 September 2023. This key decision is to be taken by the Director Adult Social Care and Health under the scheme of delegation. The decision to delegate was made at the Lead Member for Adult Social Care And Health meeting on 31st October 2022.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Thomas Skilton 07701 394691

18 Apr 2023	Cabinet	Value for Money External Auditors Report	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Ian Gutsell 01273 481399
18 Apr 2023	Cabinet	External Audit Plan 2022/2023 This report sets out in detail the work to be carried out by the Council's External Auditors on the Council's accounts for financial year 2021/22.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Ian Gutsell 01273 481399
18 Apr 2023 Page 44	Cabinet	Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2023/24 This report sets out the Council's Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan of internal audit work to be carried out during the financial year 2022/23 for approval by Cabinet.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Russell Banks 01273 481447
18 Apr 2023	Cabinet	Scrutiny Review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local To consider and comment on the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee and agree the response to the recommendations of the review.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Martin Jenks 01273 481327
20 Apr 2023	Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Procurement of specialist sexual health The Lead Member agreed on 22 March 2022 an extension of the current contract of the Specialist Sexual Health Service to March 2024 with the current provider East	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Tony Proom 01273 335252

		<p>Sussex NHS Trust.</p> <p>This extension was required due to receiving no provider bids in the last tender process in 2021. This paper requests approval to now re-commence the procurement of Specialist Sexual Health Services for award April 1st 2024.</p>				
<p>April 2023</p> <p>Page 45</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>	<p>Award of Contract for the provision of a modular building at Wadhurst CE Primary School to accommodate a new nursery provision (subject to planning permission) To provide a 60ft nursery provision on site at Wadhurst CE Primary School. This will allow the current provision in the village to move to the school site and the existing building to be made surplus to requirements. Funding has been allocated in the Capital Programme to provide a modular building to accommodate the new facilities at Wadhurst School and allowing education to be provided for pupils between the ages of 2 to 11 years. A contractor needs to be appointed to start in June 2023 for opening in September 2023.</p>	<p>KD</p>		<p>Report, other documents may also be submitted</p>	<p>Nigel Brown 07394 410630</p>
<p>April 2023</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>	<p>Freehold Disposal of the former Firstfield Resource Centre, 42 London Road Hailsham The Council own the freehold of the former Firstfields Resource Centre and it is adjacent to an operational asset owned by SEACamb. Both public sector landowners agreed to a joint disposal to maximise the</p>	<p>KD</p>		<p>Report, other documents may also be submitted</p>	<p>Nigel Brown 07394 410630</p>

		<p>capital receipt. The joint disposal will occur once SEACamb move to their new accommodation which is being procured. Both organisations have jointly marketed for disposal via a property agent and offers have been received and evaluated. The officer decision report will be finalised, recommending a joint disposal to a purchaser on a conditional basis, subject to planning permission. This is subject to SEACamb finalising their vacation of their current operational asset. The Council will secure 70% of the capital receipts on completion.</p>				
April 2023 Page 46	Chief Operating Officer	<p>Former Etchingham Primary School site - Disposal Agreement to Auction sale terms and sales capital receipt achieved at auction for the sale of the former Etchingham Primary School site.</p>	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Zoe Tweed 07701 021868
April 2023	Director of Children's Services	<p>Award of the Youth Employability Service (YES) contract Decision to award the Youth Employability Service contract in May once re-tendering process has been completed, with new contract to commence 1st October 2023.</p> <p>The Youth Employability Service help meet East Sussex County Council's statutory duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training. The service provides good quality support to a significant number of</p>	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Caroline McKiddie 01323 463729

		vulnerable young people, ensuring they have the opportunity to progress into and through post 16 education, training or employment improving their life chances and choices.				
22 May 2023	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability	Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2023-2024 The Lead Member is recommended to approve the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for the 2023-24 academic year following the required consultation.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Ian Crudge 0300 3309472
23 May 2023 Page 47	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change	To approve the granting of a new Lease to the Trustees of the West Hills & District Community Centre The current Lease dated 12 March 2008 expires 11 March 2023 and it is proposed that ESCC grant the Trustees a new Lease for a period of 25 years which will allow the Trustees to be able to seek grant funding.	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Joanne Johnston, Zoe Tweed 01273 336621, 07701 021868
23 May 2023	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change	Former Hindsland Playing Fields, Eastbourne Road, Polegate - Disposal of Freehold The land known as Former Hindsland Playing Fields was declared surplus in 1989. At the end of an appropriate marketing period, Officer recommendations for the preferred purchaser will be presented in a Lead Member report to formally declare the site to be surplus, approve the sale and to ask the Chief Operating Officer be granted authority to	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Rebecca Lewis 07955 312371

		agree detailed terms with the preferred purchaser and if they don't complete the purchase, to move the next prospective purchaser(s) if appropriate.				
6 Jun 2023	Cabinet	<p>East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and the South Downs NPA Waste and Minerals Plan Review</p> <p>To recommend to Full Council that; the modifications proposed to the Submission version of the Waste and Minerals Plan Review are published for statutory public consultation. These modifications are deemed necessary in order for the Plan to be found 'sound' and are in response to feedback received from the Planning Inspectorate following the Public Examination into the Plan in November 2022.</p>	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Ed Sheath 01273 481632
12 Jun 2023	Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health	<p>Retender of Integrated Health and Wellbeing Service</p> <p>Seeking Lead Member approval to commence re-tendering of the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Service in July 2023. The service provides evidence-based support to enable people across East Sussex to make changes to their lifestyle to improve their health.</p>	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Nicola Blake 01273 335060

Report to:	People Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	16 March 2023
By:	Chief Executive
Title:	Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)
Purpose:	To review scrutiny's input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process for the financial year 2023/24 and to consider related items for inclusion in the committee's work programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Review the committee's input into the RPPR process;**
- 2) Identify any potential areas for inclusion in the committee's future work programme on services or issues within the Committee's remit;**

1 Background

1.1 The Council's integrated business and financial planning process, Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR), matches available resources with our delivery plans for our priority outcomes so that we focus and protect our spending where it will deliver our priorities most effectively. It also ensures we have the demographic trends and performance information to monitor progress.

1.2 Scrutiny committees actively engage in the process, firstly to bring the insight they have gained through scrutiny work into the planning process and, secondly, to help influence their future work programmes, so that scrutiny work can continue to inform RPPR on an ongoing basis.

2 Scrutiny engagement in Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources

2.1 In July 2022 scrutiny committees considered relevant parts of the quarter 4 2021/22 (end of year) monitoring report and the 2022 State of the County report. This enabled scrutiny to consider performance achievements and challenges over the preceding year, alongside engagement with the forward-looking demographic, policy and financial analysis in the State of the County report. The committees' work planning awaydays in September enabled further consideration of issues arising from State of the County for the services within the committee's remit and ensured that key issues were incorporated into the committee's ongoing work programme.

2.2 In September 2022 each scrutiny committee considered an updated version of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and significant updates to the policy context since State of the County, as set out in a report considered by Cabinet on 29 September 2022. The scrutiny committees were asked to identify any further work or information needed for consideration at their November meetings.

2.3 At the November meetings the committees reviewed a range of existing information about the services within the remit of each committee to provide an overview of the current position prior to considering draft plans for the coming year. This included the current Portfolio Plans, extracts from the Financial Budget Summary for 2022/23 and remaining 2023/24 savings plans, as set out in the February 2022 Council budget report, where applicable. The meeting provided a

further opportunity to request any information required by scrutiny to inform its engagement with RPPR, for consideration at the RPPR Boards in December or as part of the wider work programme.

2.4 The scrutiny committees established RPPR Boards to provide more detailed input into the RPPR planning process. These met in December 2022 to consider and agree any recommendations on the draft 2023/24 Portfolio Plans, the financial position and the existing savings plans. The Boards:

- considered the emerging financial outlook based on Government announcements during the autumn;
- considered any amendments to the draft Portfolio Plans and how priorities were reflected against the proposed key areas of budget spend for the coming year;
- assessed the potential impact of planned savings on services; and
- agreed comments and recommendations to Cabinet.

2.5 Appendix 1 summarises the comments and recommendations made by the People Scrutiny Committee RPPR Board to Cabinet.

2.6 The committee is invited to:

- consider any areas arising from RPPR scrutiny discussions which should be included in the committee's future work programme - careful selection of topics will enable the Committee to be well positioned to comment on the impact of service changes, future service delivery and budget proposals as part of the ongoing RPPR process; and
- review the committee's input to the RPPR process and consider any improvements to the process from a scrutiny perspective.

2.7 Scrutiny's input to planning, through RPPR, for 2024/25 will begin at the July meeting with consideration of relevant parts of the quarter 4 2022/23 (end of year) monitoring report and the 2023 State of the County report.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Committee is recommended to review its input into the RPPR process and ensure its future work programme incorporates any areas that are likely to inform the future RPPR process.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser

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Summary comments for Cabinet – People Scrutiny RPPR Board (16.12.22)

1.1. The People Scrutiny RPPR Board met on the 16 December 2022 and agreed comments to be put to Cabinet, on behalf of the parent Committee, for its consideration in January 2023. The information supplied to the Board to support its discussions comprised of:

- a Local Government Association (LGA) briefing on the Autumn Statement 2022;
- a summary of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Local Government Finance Policy Statement 2023/24 – 2024/25; and
- the draft portfolio plans for the Adult Social Care and Health and the Children’s Services Departments.

1.2. The Board met before the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023 to 2024 was published on 19 December 2022. The Board received an update from the Chief Finance Officer at their meetings on the finance briefings circulated and asked clarifying questions on publication of Council Tax limits and specific grants.

1.3. The comments of the People Scrutiny RPPR Board are set out below:

Adult Social Care and Health

1.4 The Board received an update from the Director of Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) on the draft ASCH portfolio plan, and noted that the delay to implementation of the planned reforms to Adult Social Care charging would provide greater capacity for the Department to focus on delivery of other priority plans and agendas in the coming year. These included:

- Working with health partners to deliver the Sussex Integrated Care Strategy and its pan-Sussex priorities to grow and support the health and care workforce, improve the use of digital technology and information, and support stronger partnerships and collaboration at a locality level.
- Developing an integrated community model to strengthen links between community health and social care services, borough and district councils, and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and ensure a joined up offer in East Sussex.
- Preparing for reintroduction of Care Quality Commission assurance inspections in 2023.
- Working with partners to: maximise financial inclusion and coordinate a cross-sector response to the rising cost of living; provide support to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, including through ongoing delivery of the Homes for Ukraine scheme; and build community networks, with this work all brought together under a new Partnerships Team.

1.5 The Board welcomed the draft Portfolio Plan for ASCH and supported the priorities and plans set out within it, which responded to strategic challenges for ASCH (such as around workforce, digitisation and safeguarding) that the Committee had considered in the last year. No changes were requested.

1.6 The Board had concerns about the ongoing real-terms reduction to the Public Health Grant that had been signalled nationally. The Board received assurances that uncertainty around future allocations was factored into planning and any reductions in the grant in 2023/24 would be managed through the Public Health Reserve.

Children's Services

1.4. The Board received an update from the Director of Children's Services, Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability and Lead Member for Children and Families on the Department's priorities for the coming year, outlined in the draft Children's Services Portfolio Plan.

1.5. The Board discussed the draft plan and priority areas of work outlined, and asked:

- if health visiting targets were being met, which the Director confirmed was an area of focus and challenge for the service;
- about challenges with recruitment in, and community access to, schools;
- questions to understand the Department's strategy around use of Special School Placements and mainstream provision in meeting Special Educational Needs (SEN), and the role of cost and parental choice in determining provision;
- about mechanisms for assessing the performance of, and inclusion in, academies;
- about progress with reshaping the internal structures of the Education Division; and
- about parental concerns around SEN provision potentially driving increasing numbers of children being Electively Home Educated.

1.6. The Board supported the draft Children's Services Portfolio Plan and the plans and priorities within it. No changes were requested.

1.7. The Board agreed that, in light of previous updates the Committee had received on particular challenges with improving school attendance in the county, the Board was supportive of the Department's work to improve school attendance and that this should be a priority area of focus in the coming year.