

**Report to:** People Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 25 September 2023

**By:** Assistant Chief Executive

**Title:** People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

**Purpose:** To review and discuss the People Scrutiny Committee's future work programme

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) review and agree the latest work programme set out at Appendix 1;
  - 2) review upcoming items on East Sussex County Council's Forward Plan as set out at Appendix 2 to identify any issues that may require more detailed scrutiny.
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## **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***

#### **School Exclusions**

2.2 The Review into School Exclusions is underway. Review meetings are considering evidence around preventative strategies, work with early help and education services, appropriate responses to children at risk, the role of governors and council messaging.

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

#### **School Attendance**

2.4 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. A scoping board meeting was held in 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 A further short scoping board meeting will be held on 15 November 2023 to build on issues discussed at the 2022 scoping board and draft Terms of Reference for this review.

### ***Reference Groups***

#### **Prevention in Children's Services**

2.7 Following the agreement at the March Committee that the Prevention in Children's Services Review be converted into a Reference Group, the Group held its first meeting on 29 June 2023. The Group heard from the Department about its work on Family Safeguarding and Family Hubs, both of which focus on whole family support and early intervention to prevent the need for more serious intervention later.

2.8 The next Prevention in Children's Service Reference Group is planned for 17 November 2023 where it will focus on progress in the development of the safeguarding programme and Family Hubs.

### ***Awayday***

2.9 An Awayday is planned for the 02 October 2023 to provide the Committee with an update on key future developments in Adult Social Care and Children's Services and the opportunity for the Committee to review the work programme for 2024.

### ***Forward Plan***

2.10 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 December 2023 is included at Appendix 3. 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.

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