

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 13 November 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) 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 work programme was reviewed by the Committee at its work planning awayday on 2 October, where it was agreed:

- to establish a People Scrutiny Reference Group to review the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Department's work to prepare for the upcoming peer review and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection. It was agreed the first meeting of the Group will take place in December/early January before the peer review which is taking place in February 2024. Further meetings will take place to explore the findings of the peer review and CQC assessment;
- the Committee would receive a briefing on the local and national Suicide Prevention Strategies;
- the Committee would receive a joint report from ASCH and Children's Services (CS) on the transition process from children's to adult services for different groups; and
- the Committee would receive an update on the work of IMPOWER who are supporting CS to develop strategies for providing quality, cost effective children's care.

2.2 Subsequent to the awayday a request was made for the Committee to receive a report on the Youth Employability Service contract.

2.3 These changes are reflected on the latest draft work programme attached at Appendix 1. The Committee is asked to review, discuss any further amendments to, and agree the latest work programme.

2.4 When considering potential topics for inclusion in the work programme, the Committee is asked to consider a range of questions. These include:

- Is the topic relevant to the Council's Corporate Priorities?
- Is the issue of concern or of relevance to East Sussex residents?
- Can Scrutiny have an impact and add value by scrutinising this issue, service or policy?
- Is the issue one that the Committee can realistically influence?
- Are the resources needed to undertake the review available?

Scrutiny Reviews

School Exclusions

2.5 The review into School Exclusions has concluded and the final report is included on this meeting agenda.

School Attendance

2.6 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 levels 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. The Board therefore agreed that the review should commence in 2023 when there would be a clearer sense of the long-term impact of COVID on school absences.

2.7 A further short scoping board meeting will be held in December 2023 to build on issues discussed at the 2022 scoping board and draft Terms of Reference for this review. To enable this review to progress, it is proposed that the updated Terms of Reference will be circulated and agreed by the Committee virtually.

Reference Groups

Prevention in Children's Services

2.8 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.

2.9 The next Prevention in Children's Services Reference Group is planned for 15 December 2023 which will focus on progress in the development of the safeguarding programme and Family Hubs. The Committee agreed at the work planning awayday to include the provision of youth services in East Sussex under the remit of this Reference Group.

Forward Plan

2.10 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 November 2023 to 29 February 2024 is included at Appendix 2. 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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