

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Setting the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme 2019/2020

22 JULY 2019

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.
2. The topics considered by the Panel in 2018/2019 are listed below for Members' information:
 - Early Help and Prevention Services in Middlesbrough – Full Review
 - Family and Friends (Kinship) Care – Update
 - Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report – Update

BACKGROUND

2. At the start of each Municipal Year, Scrutiny Panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year.
3. Work programmes are useful as they provide some structure to a Scrutiny Panel's activity and allow for the effective planning and preparation of work.
4. As part of the process for establishing the work programme, support officers gather information/views from a number of sources. Below is a list of topics which are anticipated to be of particular interest to the Scrutiny Panel. Members are advised that the list of possible topics is not exhaustive and that additional topics can be added and considered at the Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Topical Issues and Suggestions

Topic	Details
Managing Demand in Children's Social Care Services	<p>Suggestion from Children's Services/Topical issue.</p> <p>To examine rising demand and costs and investigate approaches to try to mitigate demand.</p>

<p>Development of Edge of Care Provision</p>	<p>In January 2019, the Local Government Association (LGA) provided new analysis showing that 88% (133 out of 152) of councils were forced to spend more than planned on children’s social care during 2017/18 – an overspend of £806 million.</p> <p>It is estimated that, nationally, children’s services face a £3.1 billion funding gap by 2025 in order to maintain current levels of service.</p> <p>The Government recently announced £84 million funding over the next five years through the Strengthening families, protecting children (SFPC) programme, to support up to 20 local authorities to improve work with families to safely reduce the number of children entering care. Selected authorities will be supported to adopt one of three children’s social care innovation programme projects in their own area. Middlesbrough is one of three local authorities selected to start the programme in the spring.</p>
<p>Support for Care Leavers</p>	<p>In March 2019, Parliament UK published a research paper in relation to support for care leavers and provided background on the development of Government policies to support care leavers.</p>
<p>Corporate Parenting Arrangements</p>	<p>Suggestion from a Councillor. To examine Corporate Parenting arrangements in Middlesbrough.</p> <p>In February 2018 the Department for Education issued guidance – “Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked-After Children and Care Leavers” – designed to help local authorities consider the kinds of services that may be offered with regard to the corporate parenting principles.</p>
<p>Youth Services</p>	<p>Suggestion from a Councillor. What is the current provision in different areas of the town and is existing provision adequate and successful?</p>
<p>New arrangements for Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards</p>	<p>Update on the new arrangements for Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards.</p> <p>Following the Wood Review (2017) into the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), the Government introduced legislation through the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to reshape the way in which local agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This sees LSCBs ceasing to be the mechanism for multi-agency safeguarding, and instead sets out ‘safeguarding partner’ arrangements, which will comprise three key agencies (local authorities, health and police) with each agency having equal responsibility for the delivery of the new</p>

	arrangements. The new arrangements should be implemented by the end of September 2019, subject to relevant multi-agency approvals.
South Tees Multi Agency Children's Hub	Update on progress following the implementation of the South Tees Multi Agency Children's Hub (STMACH) in June 2019. The STMACH provides an integrated single point of access for Children's Services across the South Tees that includes access to early help and a multi-disciplinary triage at the point of access.

5. It should be noted that the topics outlined above are suggestions and the content of the Scrutiny Panel's work programme is a decision for the Panel. When considering its work programme, the Panel is advised to select topics that are of interest to it, as well as topics that the panel feels by considering, it could add value to the Local Authority's work.
6. In addition to undertaking the agreed work programme, Scrutiny Panels have also previously responded on an ad-hoc basis to emerging issues - such as considering relevant new legislation, guidance or Government consultation documents. This approach occasionally results in further topics being identified for investigation or review throughout the year.
7. On occasion ad-hoc scrutiny panels may also be established throughout the year to undertake additional investigations, for example to examine areas of work which overlap more than one Scrutiny Panel.
8. The Scrutiny Panel is also advised that, under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities have a responsibility of community leadership and a power to secure the effective promotion of community well-being. Therefore, in addition to the Scrutiny Panel's generally recognised powers (of holding the Executive to account, reviewing service provision, developing policy, considering budget plans and performance and financial monitoring), Panels also have the power to consider **any** matters which are not the responsibility of the Council but which affect the local authority **or** the inhabitants of its area. For example, nationally, local authorities have undertaken scrutiny work on issues such as post office closures, rural bus services, policing matters and flood defence schemes.

Scrutiny work plan prioritisation aid

9. Members may wish to use the aid attached at **Appendix 1** to prioritise issues where scrutiny can make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

10. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2019/20 Municipal Year. At its previous meeting, the Executive Director of Children's Services, Director of Children's Care and Director of Partnerships and Prevention, were in attendance to provide an overview of the main services within the Scrutiny Panel's remit and outline key issues and challenges.

11. When considering its work programme, the Scrutiny Panel is asked to ensure that topics agreed for inclusion:-
 - Affect a group of people living within the Middlesbrough area.
 - Relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence.
 - Are not issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board or the Scrutiny Panels have considered during the last 12 months.
 - Do not relate to an individual service complaint; and
 - Do not relate to matters dealt with by another Council Committee, unless the issue deals with procedure.
12. It is suggested that the Scrutiny Panel has a mixture of working styles in its programme. This can include detailed and in-depth reviews, shorter topics, or one-off investigations.
13. Once the Scrutiny Panel has identified the areas of priority, support staff will draw those topics into a programme for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RECOMMENDATION

14. That the Scrutiny Panel identifies two topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2019/20, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

15. Throughout the report, reference is made to documents published by the Local Government Association (LGA), Gov.uk, Assets Publishing Service, Middlesbrough Council.

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APPENDIX 1

