

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

Setting the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme 2022/23

20 JUNE 2022

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

BACKGROUND

2. At the start of every 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.

Topic carried over from 2021/22

- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** (the Draft Final Report is scheduled to be considered by the scrutiny panel at Agenda Item 6).

Topics agreed in 2021/22, which have not been investigated

- **School Meals and Physical Education**

Topical issues

Topic	Details
The impact of COVID on learning	<p>In May 2022, the Educational Endowment Fund (EEF) published new research on the impact of COVID on learning.</p> <p>Four- and five-year-olds were less likely to meet the expected levels of development in 2021 than before the pandemic, with parents and schools reporting that children's personal-social and emotional development, language, literacy, and numeracy skills had been affected.</p> <p>The research finds that:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While all pupils' learning has been affected, the attainment gap between socially disadvantaged students and their classmates has grown across all age groups. • There is some evidence that in primary schools, younger year groups have been the most significantly affected. • Aside from the impact on attainment, teachers have frequently reported concerns around the impact on pupil wellbeing. <p><i>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/new-pandemic-adversely-affected-young-childrens-development-with-fewer-reaching-expected-levels-by-the-end-of-reception-class</i></p>
<p>Every child deserves the best start in life</p>	<p>In April 2022, Ofsted published a new strategy for the next 5 years (2022 to 2027).</p> <p>Ofsted's recent reports on education recovery highlighted the serious impact the pandemic has had on some of the youngest children. Many have gaps in their communication and language skills and are behind where they should be in their personal, social, emotional, and physical development.</p> <p>The early years workforce has also been hit hard. Thousands have left the sector since the first lockdown in 2020, while those who have stayed are often struggling to get by on low wages. There has also been a drop in the number of childcare providers.</p> <p>To play its part in the recovery, the new strategy commits Ofsted to helping make sure every child's earliest experience of education is as good as it can be. It states that Ofsted will use research and insight to support young children's physical, social and wider development, increase training for the inspection workforce and promote a better understanding of early education and care in support of positive change.</p> <p>Ofsted will also share data and insights about group-owned early years providers, to improve regulatory oversight at the group level, and work with government to simplify the regulatory regime for childminders.</p> <p><i>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/every-child-deserves-the-best-start-in-life</i></p>
<p>Leading and delivering early childhood services</p>	<p>In February 2022, the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) published a report entitled 'Leading and delivering early childhood services: 10 insights from 20 places across England and Wales'.</p>

	<p>The case for supporting families during the early years of a child’s life, from conception to age 5, is strong. Early childhood is recognised as a critical period, determining physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and behavioural development in ways that have lifelong effects. The right support for families during this time can fundamentally change lives.</p> <p>The report gives 10 insights for leading maternity and early years services, based on the learning from the 20 local areas in England and Wales that engaged with EIF.</p> <p><i>https://www.eif.org.uk/report/leading-and-delivering-early-childhood-services-10-insights-from-20-places-across-england-and-wales</i></p>
<p>Pupil Premium</p>	<p>In April 2022, the EEF released a new evidence brief, which identifies robust research that schools can use to guide their decision-making around how to use their pupil premium funding.</p> <p>The tool focuses on three central areas of school development recommended by the EEF’s tiered model - high-quality teaching, targeted academic support and wider strategies - to signpost specific evidence-informed resources on important areas of teaching and learning, such as professional development and strategies to support pupils with SEND.</p> <p><i>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/guidance-for-teachers/using-pupil-premium</i></p>
<p>Sexual abuse in schools and colleges</p>	<p>In June 2021, following its review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, Ofsted published findings and recommendations on sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse.</p> <p>It was recommended that school and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people.</p> <p><i>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges</i></p>

Suggestions

5. Suggestions from **Children’s Services**, reflecting priorities, key issues and future challenges will be conveyed at the meeting.
6. The following suggestions have also been received:

Suggestion	Details
Air pollution outside schools and the impact on school attendance	Air pollution outside schools and the impact this has on school attendance and rates, due to the high levels of parking outside schools during collection and drop off times. <i>Suggestion from a Councillor</i>
Teaching children about budgeting	There is a need for children to be educated on how to budget their money. <i>Suggestion from a Councillor</i>
Digital inclusion for children and young people	A strategic priority for the Council is to create and deliver a strategy to increase digital inclusion for children, young people and adults across Middlesbrough. <i>Suggestion from an officer (see the Strategic Plan workplan 2022-24)</i>
Children who struggle making friends at school	There are many children out there that struggle to make friends and some even don't have any friends at all , the children in question can be bullied or find life hard. What can Middlesbrough Council do to help this group of children to make friends, feel like they are part of this world and relevant and to keep friends? <i>Suggestion from a member of the public</i>

7. It should be noted that the suggested topics outlined above are exactly that, suggestions. The content of the scrutiny panel's work programme is entirely a decision for the panel to make. When considering the 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

11. 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

12. The scrutiny panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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

16. That the scrutiny panel identifies two topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2022/23, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

17. Throughout the report, reference is made to information published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) and Ofsted.

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