

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

Setting the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme 2021/22

28 June 2021

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2021/22 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 2020/21

- Behaviour, Discipline and Bullying in Schools (Draft Final Report to be considered in July).

Topics agreed in 2020/21, which have not been investigated

In-depth reviews:

- The impact of Covid-19 and the attainment gap.

Task and finish group:

- The cost of school uniforms.

Topical issues

Topic	Details
Impact of COVID-19 on education and the Council's Recovery Plan	<p>It is commonly acknowledged that months of lost time in school and longer-term changes to schooling arrangements are likely to have a significant detrimental effect on pupil attainment (particularly that of disadvantaged groups) in future years. The impact of COVID-19 on inequalities in educational outcomes continues to be a key focus of the Council's Recovery Plan.</p> <p><i>(Reported in the Strategic Plan 2020-23 - Progress at Year-End 2020/21 submitted to Executive on 15 June 2021).</i></p>

<p>Post-16 Education</p>	<p>The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill was introduced in Parliament on 18 May 2021, underpinning the government’s skills and training revolution.</p> <p>The key measures introduced in the Bill are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding employers in the heart of the skills system, by making it a legal requirement that employers and colleges collaborate to develop skills plans so that the training on offer meets the need of local areas, and so people no longer have to leave their home-towns to find great jobs. • Supporting the transformation of the current student loans system which will give every adult access to a flexible loan for higher-level education and training at university or college, useable at any point in their lives. • Introducing new powers to intervene when colleges are failing to deliver good outcomes for the communities they serve, and to direct structural change where needed to ensure colleges improve. <p><i>(Reported by the Department of Education - https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legislation-to-help-transform-opportunities-for-all)</i></p>
<p>Children missing education</p>	<p>This research was commissioned by the Local Government Association in December 2019 in response to a growing concern that more and more children were missing out on their entitlement to a formal full-time education.</p> <p>The purpose of this research is to look at the issue of children missing education in its entirety. Drawing on evidence provided by local authorities, school leaders and parents we try to understand who the children are who are missing out on a formal full time education, how many children fit this description, what evidence there is for the long-term impact of children missing education and how local and national government might work together to address this issue.</p> <p>A common theme that has emerged from this research is that the way that the range of existing policies and guidance around pupil registration, attendance, admissions, exclusions and education otherwise than at school comes together is not seamless. While parents, local authorities and schools all have both responsibilities and powers to ensure that children receive the education to which they are entitled, some significant omissions in the current legislation mean that it is possible for children to slip through the net.</p> <p><i>(Reported by the Local Government Association and the ISOS Partnership - https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/children-missing-education)</i></p>
<p>Sexual abuse in schools and colleges</p>	<p>On 21 April 2021, Ofsted published plans for a review into safeguarding policies and practices relating to sexual abuse in state and independent schools and colleges.</p> <p>The review was announced by government, after anonymous</p>

	<p>testimonials of sexual abuse were published on the website 'Everyone's Invited'.</p> <p>The government has asked Ofsted to carry out an immediate review of safeguarding policies in state and independent schools and colleges in relation to sexual abuse. The review will look at whether schools and colleges have appropriate processes in place to allow pupils to report sexual abuse concerns freely, knowing these will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.</p> <p>The review will establish whether there is sufficient guidance for schools and colleges on how they should deal with sexual harassment and violence allegations, and whether they understand and implement guidance well. It will also seek to identify whether current inspection regimes in both state and private schools are strong enough to address concerns and promote the welfare of children.</p> <p><i>(Reported by the Government - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-review-of-sexual-abuse/ofsted-review-into-sexual-abuse-in-schools-terms-of-reference)</i></p>
<p>Sufficiency of school places (an update)</p>	<p>There is some risk around the sufficiency of Year 7 school places in the medium-term.</p> <p>The risk was scored upwards to reflect initial notification from the Department for Education (DfE) of a potential delay in the scheduled completion of Outwood Academy Riverside, which the DfE has advised may now be January 2024, rather than summer 2023 as originally planned.</p> <p>This potential delay could result in a shortfall in school places for the September 2023 intake. However, the Council is working with DfE to mitigate any delay and plan for any extra spaces that may be required.</p> <p>There is no potential shortfall in places for September 2021 and the potential shortfall in places for September 2022 has been mitigated by actions undertaken by the Council, in particular approval by the Executive on 24 May 2021 of £2.3m capital investment at Kings Academy to create 128 addition places.</p> <p><i>(Reported in the Strategic Plan 2020-23 - Progress at Year-End 2020/21 submitted to Executive on 15 June 2021).</i></p>

Suggestions

- Children's Services has advised that the following suggestions will provide Members with a holistic view of education (and its associated risks) as it comes out of the second wave of Covid-19.

Suggestion	Details
Recovery	It is acknowledged that the impact of Covid-19 has resulted in months of lost time in school. As a result the Local Authority has

	<p>worked with partners to develop a recovery plan to respond to the numerous challenges.</p> <p>This topic will cover a wide range of recovery activities and provide assurance to Scrutiny.</p> <p><i>Suggestion submitted by Children's Services</i></p>
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	<p>This topic will provide assurance to Scrutiny that young people are receiving appropriate provision for their needs and that the Local Authority is adequately prepared for the SEND inspection framework (Local Areas inspection- Ofsted).</p> <p><i>Suggestion submitted by Children's Services</i></p>
Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) Improvement	<p>This topic will provide assurance to Scrutiny that young people are receiving appropriate provision for their needs and that the Local Authority is adequately prepared for the ILACS inspection framework in relation to education (Children Missing from Education, Exclusion, Elective Home Education and Virtual School etc.)</p> <p><i>Suggestion submitted by Children's Services</i></p>

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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

10. 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

11. The scrutiny panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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

15. That the scrutiny panel identifies two topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2021/22, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

16. Throughout the report, reference is made to information published by the Local Authority, the Department of Education and the Local Government Association.

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