



Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 July 2010

Report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a long list of items for inclusion in the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme in 2010/11.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee decide which items they would like to include in their work programme for 2010/11.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 A well planned committee work programme is a critical component of a successful overview and scrutiny function. A programme of carefully selected topics can help engage the public, connect with the council's priorities and community concerns, and also has the potential to add value to the work of the council. It is important that this committee's work programme is developed and agreed by its members.
- 3.2 The committee can choose to scrutinise different subject areas in different ways depending on the subject size and the depth of investigation required. For example, it can set up in depth task groups, hold issue specific meetings, or take short, discrete agenda items. In all cases the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to require the attendance of the council's Executive and officers to answer questions at their meetings. Overview and scrutiny committees also have the power to require information from 'relevant partner organisations'.
- 3.3 It is possible that the committee will have more subject areas that it would like to consider than time and resources available. To help prioritise the

committee should consider the following criteria:

- Whether overview and scrutiny investigation will lead to an effective outcome / impact
- The degree of fit with corporate or community strategy priorities
- Public concern
- Stakeholder or partner concern
- Scope for efficiency gains
- Whether it duplicates other work
- Time and resources

3.4 To assist the development of a work programme for 2010/11 a number of suggestions are set out in Appendix A. Some of the items follow up on previous work or are requests made by the committee during the last municipal year.

3.5 Committee work programming is an on-going process and members are strongly encouraged to suggest items for review as and when they arise. Suggestions can come from;

- Ward issues that are also relevant across the borough,
- The local impact of a major national issue, for example the concerns around Baby P prompted concerns around safeguarding which was subsequently reviewed by the this committee on a number of occasions.
- Members of the public.

3.6 In order to accommodate emerging issues it is also important that there is room for flexibility within the work programme so new agenda items can be slotted in.

4.0 Youth offending task group

4.1 In October 2009 this committee commissioned an in-depth piece of work on youth offending. This work is in the very early stages having only held one meeting and made one visit. In considering the work programme a number of issues has emerged that brings into question whether this is the best time to continue with this work. Issues to be taken into consideration are as follows:

- The impetus for the review was largely based around the council's difficulty in meeting Local Area Agreement target N1 111 - Reducing first time entrants into the youth justice system. This indicator is now on track and meeting its aims.
- Since the review has started there has been a change of government. The new government may have a different approach to dealing with youth offending, the committee may wish wait until the future direction of this area is clearer before deciding a focus for scrutiny
- As there has been a significant change in the membership of this committee and within the wider political climate, members may feel that there is another task group topic that is more pertinent. Members

should note that the committee is only able to have one task group running at a time.

4.2 The committee should decide whether to:

- Continue with this work in its current form
- Look it at as a agenda item later in the year
- Convene a new task group with a different focus.

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