

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY 4JULY 2019 COMMITTEE

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to consider issues for inclusion in the work programme of the Committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

2. Background

- 2.1 The work programme is designed to set out the key issues to be addressed by the Committee during the year and provide it with a timetable of work. The Committee itself is responsible for setting its own work programme, subject to the coordinating role of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.
- 2.2 To be most effective, the work programme should provide a basis and framework for the work of the Committee, while retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to any important issues that emerge during the course of the year. The work programme is therefore intended to be a working document that the Committee can develop and refer to throughout the year.
- 2.3 In order to ensure that the Committee is able to undertake all of its business and respond to emerging issues, there will be scope for additional meetings or visits not detailed in the work programme.
- 2.4 The remit of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee covers the following:-

To review and scrutinise any matter relating to the service performance and commissioning for children, young people and their families including Safeguarding and Child Protection, Family Support and Children's Social Care, Corporate Parenting, Educational Attainment and Skills, Relationship with Schools and Youth Services.

- 2.5 The work programme should reflect the remit of the Committee and the need to balance its responsibility for undertaking scrutiny, performance management and policy review (where necessary). The work programme should also reflect and be aligned to the key priorities of the Council as set out in documents such as the Sunderland Strategy and Corporate Plan

3. Draft Work Programme 2019/20

- 3.1 On 25 July 2019, The Committee held a work programme development session to discuss the issues and approach it wishes to take for the year ahead. Ian Parry from the Centre of Public Scrutiny was also in attendance to

provide input and advice and advice. Jill Colbert, Karen Davison and Simon Marshall were also in attendance.

3.2 A issues were raised during the session including:-

- It is important that the Committee focuses on those issues of most importance. Children services covers a wide range of areas and it is important not to spread the work of the Committee too thinly. This will help the Committee to achieve more positive outcomes. This could also be facilitated by avoiding unnecessary repetition in the work programme and the use of excessive data.
- It is important to think about the structure of the work programme. This can help the Committee to be more productive, for example by the use of themed meetings and focusing on a particular topic.
- It is important to involve partners to help break down the barriers that are currently blocking service improvement including data sharing and the way partners work together.
- The importance of engaging with service users and parents in order to make a significant and lasting improvement in service delivery. Also focusing on preventative measures that can be taken.
- The Committee may wish to consider the use of Task and Finish Group or evidence gathering sessions in order to examine priority topics in more detail and hear the views of partners and clients. It could also be an opportunity to commission expert advice and information gathering. This should help the Committee to have a better understand the service being provided and highlight areas of improvement e.g. the contribution that Children's Centres make to Early Help, the prevalence of certain issues in Sunderland and the level of referrals to the front door.

3.3 Members agreed to discuss potential themes, which centre around improvement planning, and ways of working including partner involvement at the next meeting of the Committee and based on this discussion agree a more detailed work programme.

4. Recommendations

That the Scrutiny Committee consider the feedback from the work programme session and consider the issues for inclusion in the work programme for the coming year.

5. Background Papers

None

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