



Haringey Council

Report for:	Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel – 29 September 2014	Item Number:	
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Title:	Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel; Workplan for 2014/15
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Report Authorised by:	Cllr Kirsten Hearn Chair, Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel
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Ward(s) affected:	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:
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1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1. This report outlines the workplan for the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel for 2014/15 as well as highlighting a number of considerations that may influence the effectiveness and success of scrutiny.

1.2. Cabinet Member introduction

N/A

2. Recommendation

2.1. That the Panel recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the draft work plan for the Panel be approved.

3. Other options considered

N/A

4. Development of Workplan

4.1 The process for the development of the work plan for the Panel begun in July with the review by undertaken Centre for Public Scrutiny in July of the structure of scrutiny and

priorities for the work programme. Following this, the Scrutiny Cafe consultation event was held, involving non executive members, officers and key partners to discuss the issues arising from the review and, in particular, the development of the work plan.

4.2 The structure of overview and scrutiny and the formal constitution of the scrutiny panels was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 July. Following this, the Chair of the Panel met with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families and senior officers in August 14 to discuss the suggestions that had come out of the work planning process to date as well as any other potential issues that might be included. An informal Panel meeting was held on 8 September so that Panel Members could also input their views on the work plan proposals.

4.3 The work plan can include the following:

- In-depth projects;
- One-off reports on specific issues from services;
- Question and Answer sessions with Cabinet Members or key partners;
- Performance reports; and
- Budget scrutiny.

5. In-depth projects

5.1 In depth projects involve the Panel considering an issue intensively over a period of time before making recommendations. This process can include evidence gathering sessions, consultation events and research. Panels normally undertake one in-depth piece of work at a time. Additional projects can be started once previous pieces of work have been completed. Work on them can be undertaken at scheduled meetings of the Panel or additional evidence gathering sessions can be arranged. In addition, other activities to gather information and evidence can be included, such as visits. It is intended that the format is very flexible and approaches adopted that fit best with the issue being considered and likely to be most effective.

5.2 The following issues have so far been identified as potential in-depth reviews;

1. **Transition for young people.** The journey for young people from adolescence to adulthood with aim of gaining an understanding of what it is like to be a young person in Haringey at the moment. To cover universal as well as targeted services and involve other scrutiny panels.
2. **Childhood obesity.** How is this addressed by the Council, schools and other partners?

5.3 Further work will need to be undertaken to develop the scope and terms of reference for these should they be selected.

6. Other Issues

6.1 A number of other issues have also been identified as part of the work planning process to date. These could be dealt with as one-off items or future in-depth pieces of work;

- Bullying/hate crime in schools;

- Council contracts, including Haringey 54000;
- OFSTED report on services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
- Committees/boards/voluntary organisations relevant to children and young people;
- Test/exam results;
- Safeguarding and organised sexual abuse; and
- School improvement – progress of new academies.

6.2 A proposed schedule for consideration of these items at Panel meetings for this year is attached as Appendix A.

7. Good Scrutiny

7.1 In determining the work plan and priorities for the year, it may be useful for Panel Members to give some consideration as to what may constitute good scrutiny.

7.2 Scrutiny performs a number of functions:

- *Holding to account*; This can be achieved by:
 - Holding internal and external decision makers to account
 - Cabinet question and answer sessions
 - Calling in Cabinet decisions
- *Assisting in the development of policy and strategies*; This can include:
 - Undertaking in-depth reviews on particular issues
 - Commenting on departmental strategies
 - Performance monitoring
- *Budget scrutiny/ monitoring*

7.3 The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) has set out four general principles of good scrutiny. These propose that good scrutiny should:

- *Provide a ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers.* This should be constructive, robust and purposeful.
- *Enable the voice and concerns of the public and its community.* This should facilitate an ongoing dialogue with the public in order to create an ‘accountability relationship’. Scrutiny should also represent and engage with diverse communities and address inequalities where they exist as well as promoting public understanding of the scrutiny role.
- *Be carried out by “independent minded governors” who lead and own the scrutiny process.* They should be champions of the value and potential of good public scrutiny as a vehicle for accountability.
- *Drive improvement in public services.*

- 7.3 A key part of the role of scrutiny is to promote transparency and openness. In keeping with this principle, scrutiny meetings should wherever possible be open to the public and papers should be made available to the public.
- 7.4 Scrutiny is intended to be non party political and is not subject to the party whip. Although there are provisions for voting, recommendations agreed this way can be less effective in influencing decision makers. Scrutiny therefore works best when there is consensus.
- 7.5 In terms of delivering outcomes, scrutiny has very limited formal powers and generally achieves them by means of influence. It is therefore important to develop constructive relationships with decision makers so that they are likely to be receptive to the views of scrutiny.
- 7.6 Input from scrutiny needs to be persuasive if it is to influence decision makers effectively. A well argued case with cross party support that is backed up with solid evidence is most likely to bring about a successful outcome. Evidence to back up recommendations can come from various sources, such as:
- Feedback from local stakeholders;
 - Experience and good practice from other local authorities; and
 - Information from specialist agencies, national organisations etc.
- 7.7 Although outcomes are very important, they are not always easy to measure. For instance, if there is an expectation that decisions will be subject to close scrutiny, it is likely that this will encourage more robust processes for making them and therefore promote better decision making. In addition, challenging and ambitious recommendations are likely to have less chance of being agreed to than ones that are ineffectual.
- 7.8 Good and effective scrutiny should also:
- Tackle strategic and significant issues that are important to local residents;
 - Not duplicate or conflict with work taking place elsewhere;
 - Should add value to the work of the Council and its partners; and
 - Be timely.

8 Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. Should any of the work undertaken by panels generate recommendations with financial implications, these will be highlighted at that time.

9 Comments of the Assistant Director Corporate Governance and Legal Implications

- 9.1 Scrutiny panels work programme and the subsequent reports and recommendations that each panel produces must be approved by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix A

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel – Work Plan

Agenda Items

Monday 29th September;

1. OFSTED report on services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
2. Committees/boards relevant to children and young people
3. Workplan/what good scrutiny looks like.

Monday 3rd. November;

1. Council contracts, including Haringey 54000.
2. Safeguarding & organised sexual abuse

Monday 11th December (Budget);

Mid Term Financial Plan

Thursday 22nd January;

1. Test/exam results
2. School improvement – progress of new academies

Tuesday 17th March;

Bullying/hate crime in schools

Project;

Transition for young people: The journey for young people from adolescence to adulthood with aim of gaining an understanding of what it is like to be a young person in Haringey at the moment.