

Agenda Item no. 12

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release

Meeting: Children & Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 September 2006

Report of: The Director of Strategy and Governance

**Subject: The Children and Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme**

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To approve a work programme for the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2006/07 and into 2007/08.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee approve the theme of 'vulnerable children and young people' as the main issue for the Committee to consider in 2006/07 and agrees to receive reports and conduct reviews on issues within this theme throughout the year (utilising sub-groups of the Committee where appropriate to consider specific issues more closely) with the intention of producing a comprehensive report which: -

- addresses the issues surrounding vulnerable children and young people;
- achieves the desired outcome of improving the well-being of vulnerable and looked after children and young people in Brighton & Hove; and
- complements and consolidates the work of the Children and Young People's Trust.

- 2.2 That the Committee approve the standing agenda items of: -

(a) Quarterly performance monitoring reports; and

(b) Children's Services Inspections: to include summarised reports of OFSTED inspections, social services inspections, children's health inspections, the Annual Performance Assessment and Joint Area Review reports.

- 2.3 That the Committee also receive reports in the year on the following: -

- (a) School meals and healthy eating;
 - (b) Audit of school's PFI contract compliance;
 - (c) Update on the recommendations made by the COMART PFI scrutiny panel;
 - (d) Special Education Needs review implementation update; and
 - (e) 6 monthly and annual progress reports on the new Children & Young People's Trust and Children & Young People's Plan.
- 2.4 That the Committee receives presentations and baseline data on the following at suitable future meetings to ensure good knowledge and awareness of the wider remit of the Children & Young People's Trust: -
- (a) Children's social services; and
 - (b) Children's health services.
- 2.5 That the Committee endorse the work programme as outlined in Appendix A as the basis for its work during 2006/07 and into 2007/08, which can be amended and added to by the Committee to include additional items as necessary during the year.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 At its first meeting on 13 June 2006, the Committee considered a report of the Director of the Children & Young People's Trust outlining the basis of a draft annual work programme for the Committee and suggesting the nomination of a small group of members to work with officers to produce a draft programme for approval at today's meeting.
- 3.2 Councillors Allen, Giebeler, Wrighton and Young, overseen by the Committee chair Councillor Battle agreed to serve on the working group and met on 27 July 2006. The outcomes from that meeting are provided for the Committee's consideration in this report.
- 3.3 The working group received information relating to the performance of Children and Young People's services, including: -
- (a) Annual Performance Assessment 2004/05 'Ongoing Challenges';
 - (b) Best Value performance indicators 2005/06;
 - (c) Corporate plan strategic goals; and
 - (d) Joint Area Review 2006 Self-Assessment summary.

3.4 In addition the working group considered the corporate plan strategic goals for Children and Young People's services, the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009 and the priorities of the Local Area Agreement under the Children and Young People block.

3.5 The proposed work programme is intended to be comprehensive but still retain the capacity and flexibility to address other issues that may arise or become apparent during the year. The work programme also takes a long-term view and extends into the next municipal year.

4. Outcomes from the working group

4.1 Key Theme: Vulnerable Children

4.1.1 The working group noted evidence that suggested that 'looked after children' was an area that may benefit from review by the Committee:-

(a) Annual Performance Assessment 2004/05 'Ongoing Challenges'

Be Healthy:

- Health checks for looked after children outside of the city
- Strategies to address high proportion of births to looked after children

Enjoy and achieve:

- Educational attainment of looked after children

(b) Best value performance indicators 2005/06

PI	Performance Indicator	2005 /06 target	2005 /06 result	2006 /07 target	2007 /08 target	2008/09 target	Top 25% 2004 /05	Notes
49	Stability of placements of Looked After Children: the % of children with three or more placements during the year	15	17.5	14	14.5	14		Short-term stability remains a challenge. A 3 year plan is in place to reach the performance of comparator authorities, which includes extension of dedicated support to each family and friends placement and increased use of Family Group Conferencing.

50	Educational qualifications of Looked After Children: % of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least one GCSE at grade A*-G or a GNVQ	47	43	52	44	59	58	Targets for this indicator have been set to reflect expected results from each cohort of looked after children and to account for an estimated 5 young people who are offenders or asylum seekers who enter the system in their 18 th year and who are less likely to achieve GCSEs or equivalent. The 2007/08 target has been set at 44% to account for the unusually high proportion of pupils with statements of educational needs in this cohort. The cohorts have small numbers of children (around 30) and this increases the volatility of the indicator.
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(c) Joint Area Review Self Assessment summary 2006
'Areas for improvement'

Being Healthy:

- Managing the health needs of looked after children who are in placements out of the city continues to be a challenge

Staying Safe:

- The numbers of looked after children are still high, although they have stabilised
- At 17.9%, short term placement stability for looked after children has yet to reach the national target of 16.1%

Enjoying and Achieving:

- Further improvements are needed in the educational achievement of our looked after children

Achieving economic well being:

- The proportion of looked after children in post-16 education, employment or training is approaching the national average but is below comparator authorities

- 4.1.2 The working group however agreed that the wider theme of 'vulnerable children and young people' would represent a more strategic approach. The Children in Need Census, last conducted in 2005, identified 2,951 children and young people deemed 'in need'. The working group observed that these vulnerable individuals were also those most at risk of being taken into care. The theme of vulnerable children and young people would include looked after children, but also allow exploration of the underlying issues that create situations where children and young people are taken into care and how they are dealt with once in care.
- 4.1.3 The desired outcome of this themed approach to the work programme would be to improve the well being of vulnerable and looked after children, and to complement and consolidate the good work undertaken by the Children and Young People's Trust.
- 4.1.4 With regards to strategic priorities, the theme meets the Council priority of "ensuring all our children and young people have the best possible start in life". It also represents an area that cuts across the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes of Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution, and Achieve economic well being. The issue of vulnerable and looked after children remains of high public interest and an area where much central government work has been undertaken over the last few years.
- 4.1.5 It is proposed that under the theme of 'vulnerable children and young people', the Committee undertakes a broad review of areas under this heading that evidence suggests are cause for concern, and works towards producing an evidence based report that addresses these concerns and makes recommendations for improvement. The publication of this report could be co-ordinated to coincide with the annual review of the new Children and Young People's Trust, highlighted below at 4.3.1 as an important task for the Committee to undertake. It is intended that this report would also highlight areas of the Trust's work that are being done well, as well as areas that could be improved.
- 4.1.6 A number of specific issues were identified from the performance and self-assessment data provided to the working group, including: -
- Educational attainment of looked after children
 - Managing the health needs of looked after children
 - Conception rates among looked after children
 - Placement stability for looked after children
 - Proportion of looked after children in education, training or employment
- 4.1.7 Members were also interested in considering the physical and mental health risks to vulnerable and looked after children and young people. All these issues could be considered under each of the 5 Every Child Matters

outcomes, with each outcome considered at a separate meeting. This arrangement is incorporated into the draft work programme provided at appendix A.

4.1.8 The Committee could consider how best to approach each issue under the theme of 'vulnerable children and young people', determining whether: -

- a report from officers should be prepared;
- witnesses should be invited to meetings to share their views;
- work can be conducted by a sub-group of the Committee; or
- case studies, site visits or visits to other high-performing authorities should be conducted.

4.1.9 During discussions the working group highlighted the paramount importance of obtaining an effective baseline data set, especially with regard to social care and health, to ensure that all the Committee members can be fully informed and able to identify areas for further review. This baseline data should include: -

- Data that is monitored regularly by DfES, CSCI and OfSTED;
- Resources employed by the council and partner agencies, staff retention and turnover including trends over time and comparisons with other authorities.

4.1.10 This baseline data should be used to support the case for looking at specific issues, and be used to guide the Committee to areas where further investigation or review would be beneficial. The Committee should receive this data at the earliest stage to ensure its work is fully informed.

4.2 Standing agenda items

4.2.1 The former Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel received regular monitoring reports regarding the performance of children's education services. It also received OFSTED reports for schools in Brighton & Hove.

4.2.2 The working group agreed that it was important to continue to receive quarterly performance monitoring reports. This is to ensure that the Committee is informed of emerging and ongoing performance issues, especially as the new delivery mechanism for children and young people's services – the Trust – is new and will inevitably experience some teething problems.

4.2.3 The working group also agreed that OFSTED reports should continue to be received by the Committee. In addition it was agreed that inspection reports relating to other service areas under the Children and Young People's Trust, for example the Annual Performance Assessment including the Commission for Social Care inspection of children's social services and children's health should also be received by the Committee. From time to time there may be reports on residential care homes, fostering and

adoption that would only be reported on an exception basis. All these inspection reports could be presented to the Committee under a standing agenda item called "Children and Young People's Services Inspections".

4.3 One off reports

4.3.1 The working group also considered a series of other specific issues that were important to include on the annual work programme. These are outlined below, with reasons for their inclusion: -

(a) School meals and healthy eating

At the first meeting of CYPOSC, the chair led members of the Committee on a short exercise that brainstormed suggestions for scrutiny topics. Four members suggested schools meals and healthy eating. The working group also commented that the issue was of high public interest and had already engaged other members, for example through motions to full council.

The working group observed that there was no immediate evidence that the council were under performing in the provision of healthy school meals. However they agreed that a brief review by the Committee, suitably publicised, that highlighted the strengths and possible areas for future improvement, could be mutually beneficial to both the Committee and the Children and Young People's Trust. It would also be timely due to the requirement for new higher minimum standards for schools meals to be in place by September 2006.

(b) Review of children and young people's services integration

The working group agreed that a review of the progress of the new arrangements of integrated service delivery would be useful. It was noted that the official launch of the integrated Children and Young People's Trust is October 2006, and therefore a progress report after 6 months and review after one year of the Trust's inception would be timely.

Members commented that the progress report and review should cover in detail the new area-based integrated service delivery approach and children's centres. It should also cover an update on the newly restructured Education Welfare Service, which was highlighted by the former Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel as an area of future work.

(c) Audit of school's PFI contract compliance

The former Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel highlighted this issue. The working group considered that the Committee could usefully receive this report for noting, although it was observed that the Audit Panel was now in place with the remit of scrutinising internal control matters.

(d) Update on the recommendations made by the COMART PFI scrutiny panel

The working group agreed that the Committee should receive a report on the implementation of recommendations made by the COMART PFI scrutiny panel. One of the tasks in the Committee's terms of reference is "to monitor the implementation of any Scrutiny recommendations which have been agreed by the Executive Committees, Sub-Committees or Council.

(e) Special Educational Needs Review Implementation

On 28 November 2005, the Children, Families and Schools Committee approved recommendations for the development of special educational needs provision in Brighton & Hove. The Director of the Children and Young People's Trust agreed that a progress report on the implementation of these recommendations would be a useful item for CYPOSC to receive.

5. Member development and training needs

- 5.1 The working group considered that the key development needs for members of the Committee related to gaining an understanding of the full range of services provided by the new Children and Young People's Trust. Therefore it is recommended that at future meetings or in a suitable other form, members of the Committee receive a presentation or briefing on children and young people's social services and health services.
- 5.2 The Director of the Children and Young People's Trust also suggested that 'overviews' of the various service areas within the Children and Young People's Trust may be beneficial to the Committee. These overviews could relate to the Every Child Matters themed meetings.

6. Flexibility and capacity in the work programme

- 6.1 Members are aware that issues can and often do arise throughout the year that the Committee may wish to receive further information on, or review in greater depth. It is important that the work programme retains the capacity and flexibility to pick up issues as they arise. The work programme is also a 'work in progress' and Members should feel comfortable raising issues throughout the year.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 A draft version of the work programme for CYPOSC was circulated to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children and Young People's Trust Board and senior officers in Children and Young People Trust and Strategy and Governance directorates. Where possible, any comments have been incorporated, to ensure that the work programme will complement the work of the Children and Young People's Trust.

COMMITTEE REPORT – APPENDIX

Meeting/Date	Children & Young People’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 19 September 2006
Report of	Director of Strategy and Governance
Subject	The Children and Young People’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
Wards affected	All

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications in connection with the adoption of a work programme. It is anticipated that any expenses in connection with furthering the programme, once adopted, will come from the overview & scrutiny budget.

Finance officer consulted: Patrick Rice

Date: 8 September 2006

Legal implications

Formulation of a work programme will assist the Committee in discharging the overview and scrutiny functions delegated to it by the Council.

Lawyer consulted: John Heys

Date: 25 August 2006

Corporate/Citywide implications

Maintaining an effective scrutiny function is an important feature of a healthy local democracy. A published annual work programme will give the public important information on how the scrutiny function is protecting the interests of the whole local community.

Risk assessment

No formal risk assessment has been carried out.

Sustainability implications

There are no direct sustainability implications arising from the report.

Equalities implications

Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder

There are no direct implications for the prevention of crime and disorder.

Background papers

Notes of meeting of CYPOSC subgroup 27 July 2006.

Contact Officer

John Adams, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer, 29-1084

Appendix A – Draft Work Programme for Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee

CYPOSC Meeting	19 September 2006	14 November 2006	30 January 2007	27 March 2007	June 2007	September 2007	November 2007	January 2008
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ECM OUTCOME			BE HEALTHY	ENJOY AND ACHIEVE	STAY SAFE	MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION / ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING		
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VULNERABLE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE		Baseline data on Children’s Social Services	Conception rates among looked after children	Educational attainment of looked after children	Short term placement stability for looked after children	Proportion of looked after children in post-16 education, training and employment compared with other authorities		Completed CYPOSC report on vulnerable children and young people in Brighton & Hove
			Health needs of looked after children in placements out of the city					
			Mental and physical health of vulnerable and looked after children					

Other topics	COMART PFI scrutiny panel recommendations update	Audit of schools PFI contract compliance	School meals and healthy eating	Special Educational Needs review implementation progress				
	Children’s Trust Section 31 agreement							

Referrals: -								
Call-in								
From OSOC or Audit Panel								
From C&YP Trust or full Council								
Requests for scrutiny								
Responses to scrutiny recommendations								

Children's Services Inspections		Summary of OFSTED reports	Summary of OFSTED reports	Summary of OFSTED reports	Summary of OFSTED reports	Summary of OFSTED reports	Summary of OFSTED reports	Summary of OFSTED reports
		JAR inspection report 2006					Annual Performance Assessment 2006/07	
		Youth Offending Team inspection report 2006						

Performance Monitoring			Performance Indicators - Q1 2006/07	Performance Indicators - Q2 2006/07	Performance Indicators - Q3 2006/07	Performance Indicators - Q4 2006/07		Performance Indicators - Q1 2007/08
				6 month progress report - Children and Young People's Plan: -			Annual review of Children & Young People's Trust:- (incl. Education Welfare	

				<i>(including progress of new children's centres)</i>			<i>Service update - progress after restructuring)</i>	
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CYPOSC development		Performance Monitoring “Overview”: Steve Barton, AD Quality and Performance	“Overview”: Jon Ota, AD Healthcare Management;	“Overview”: Gil Sweetenham, AD Schools	“Overview”: Liz Rugg, Head of Child Protection	“Overview”: Gillian Cunliffe, AD Communities; Linda Ellis, Senior secondary and special schools advisor		
	A Work Programme for CYPOSC	Member development item: <u>Overview of Children’s Social Services: Supporting our vulnerable children and young people</u>	Member development item: <u>Children’s Health services</u> – an introduction to the service, resources, strengths and key challenges.		Annual Report of CYPOSC			
	Co-opted membership of CYPOSC	CPA inspection report – comments about overview and scrutiny at Brighton & Hove						