

**To the Chair and Members of the
SCHOOLS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SCHOOLS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PANEL
WORK PLAN REPORT 2013/14 (NOVEMBER UPDATE)**

| Relevant Cabinet Member(s) | Wards Affected | Key Decision |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for education and Skills and Lead Member for Children’s Services Councillor Tony Corden, Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Services to Families and support to Lead Member for Children’s Services) | All | None |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on the Panel’s work plan.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

2. Not exempt

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Panel is asked to:-
 - (a) consider and comment on the revised work plan attached at Appendix A;
and
 - (b) Identify any areas for consideration by the Panel for the period 2013/14.

BACKGROUND

4. The Panel agreed its 2013/14 work plan at its meeting on 26th June. This report provides an update on key issues relating to the work programme attached at Appendix A. Members are reminded that the work plan is a live document to be regularly reviewed and updated. Appendix A also provides an ongoing summary of issues considered together with the impacts and outcomes resulting from the Panel's work and this will also be updated on a regular basis.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Minutes of the Children's Trust Board and Corporate Parenting Panel

5. The Corporate Parenting Board met on 3rd September, and a copy is attached at appendix B for the Panel's information. The Children's Trust Board meetings have been postponed until further notice.

Domestic Violence

6. The Adults and Communities Scrutiny Panel (A and C), as part of its crime and disorder responsibility, is due to undertake a review into Domestic Violence. Part of the review may focus on the effects on children and young people who suffer a diverse range of long and short term impact from living with domestic abuse. The A and C Panel will not be agreeing the exact scope of the review until it meets on 27th November. If Members chose to include the abovementioned issue, this Panel is therefore invited to nominate a representative to take part in the review.

Outcome for Care Leavers review

7. The Outcome for Care Leavers review undertaken by the Panel during August and September, was forwarded to the Executive following the last meeting. The Panel is asked to note that a response is not formally required until 1st December, as outlined in the Overview and Scrutiny protocol, however, the Director of Children and Young Peoples Service has indicated that she may be in a position to provide a verbal update at the Panel meeting.

Issues for future consideration

8. Councillors Hodson, Mounsey and Bosmans recently met with Mark Gurrey, Assistant Director, Children and Families to consider the costs associated with appointing agency staff.

9. At the meeting it was stressed that Overview and Scrutiny was keen to provide support and to challenge the Children and Young Peoples Service by learning from best practice and providing critical friend challenge, particularly through understanding how some of the key processes are working in practice and how the Authority compares to other Local Authorities.
10. Councillor Hodson is also keen that the Panel receives information on the areas below and asks Members for their comments:-
 - Targets for the number of foster carers to be recruited and details on the extent to which they are being met;
 - Targets for reducing independent foster agencies;
 - Details of conversion rates, for example, how many initial enquiries lead to appointment of foster carers and the targets around improving timescales for those going through the approval process.
 - Details of targets for recruiting social workers and reducing the number of agency staff. To also include retention rates particularly for new starters in their first 12 months and understanding reasons why staff are leaving.

Members' seminars

11. Members will recall that an introduction to safeguarding was undertaken in the summer but further training on the following areas is required:
 - Understanding of Safeguarding – to include worked examples of how children progress through the care system and various options available at each stage; and
 - Understanding the corporate parent role.

Change to Panel meeting dates

12. Councillor Hodson has requested that the Panel meeting dates, in the New Year, be rescheduled as follows:

9th January, 2014 cancelled – rescheduled to 12th February at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber

7th March, 2014 cancelled – rescheduled to 24th March at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

13. There are no specific options to consider within this report as it provides an opportunity for the Panel to develop a work plan for 2013/14.

IMPACT ON COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES

| | Priority Outcome | Implications of this initiative |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Doncaster's economy develops and thrives, underpinned by effective education and skills | The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the council's key objectives by holding decision makers to account, reviewing performance and developing policy through robust recommendations, monitoring performance of council and external partners services and reviewing issues outside the remit of the council that have an impact on the residents of the borough. |
| 2. | Children are safe | |
| 3. | Stronger families and stronger communities | |
| 4. | Modernised and sustainable Adult Social Care Services with increased choice and control | |
| 5. | Effective arrangements are in place to deliver a clean, safe and attractive local environment | |
| 6. | The Council is operating effectively, with change embedded and sustained with robust plans in place to operate within future resource allocations | |

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

14. To maximise the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny function it is important that the work plan devised is manageable and that it accurately reflects the broad range of issues within its remit. Failure to achieve this can reduce the overall impact of the function.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The Council's Constitution states that subject to matters being referred to it by other parts of the Full Council, OSMC or the Executive and any timetables laid down by those references the Schools, Children and Young People's Panel will determine its own work programme (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 6c).
16. Overview and Scrutiny Panels Terms of reference - 3 states that the Panel be empowered to establish ad hoc working groups from within its membership, to undertake project and policy development work, to meet the objectives and targets of its annual work plan.

17. Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15 (a) states that where, in the opinion of the Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the matters under discussion are relevant to matters referred to other Scrutiny Panel(s) he/she shall consider to what extent to invite the participation of the Chair and/or other Members of the other Panel in the deliberations

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

18. The budget for the support of the Overview and Scrutiny function 2013/14 is not affected by this report however, the delivery of the work plan will need to take place within agreed budgets. There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Any financial implications relating to specific reports on the work plan will be included in those reports.

CONSULTATION

19. The work plan has been developed in consultation with Members and officers.

CONTACT OFFICER AND REPORT AUTHOR

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Background Papers

None

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