

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**08 December 2015**

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**Work Programme 2015-16 & Executive Forward Plan**

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**Purpose of this report**

The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan. It also updates Members on recent conversations resulting in the refresh of the work programme.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and approve the work programme attached, subject to any further amendments it may wish to make;
2. Consider the Executive Forward Plan; and
3. Consider whether it wishes to add any further items to the work programme and/or establish any Task Forces to assist it in reviewing specific items.

**Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

1. At previous meetings the Committee has expressed a desire to focus on its work programme so that it provides a balance of those items on which the Executive would be grateful for a steer in addition to those items that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) wishes to proactively scrutinise.
2. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel also recently agreed the importance of a number of key principles relating to ways of working, these included:-
  - the importance of defining desired outcomes of OSC items;
  - the need for the work programme to provide a balance of mandatory reports requiring consideration by OSCs, items in the Executive Forward Plan and those items that Members wanted to include as related to the outcomes of the 5-year plan; and
  - the importance of receiving reports in a timely fashion.

3. In light of the principles highlighted above it was agreed to undertake a review of scrutiny agenda-setting that would be trialled by the Children's Services OSC. Following the Committee meeting in October 2015 the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Executive Members and the Director were invited to review the work programme. Members were also invited to recommend additional items that they would like to receive at OSC. As a result of this meeting the work programme was amended to reflect the following principles:-

#### **Minimising duplication**

4. Where other bodies were accountable for performance or the committee had little influence over a report that would be considered in public elsewhere these were removed from the work programme. Examples included Fostering and Private Fostering Annual Reports. Whilst these reports contain important information it was felt that Members could attend other meetings, which were held in public so the integrity of openness and transparency was not in question. Members would be made aware of these reports and where they had a concern a specific report could be requested by any Member of the Council to be received by the OSC. A list of such reports is included at **Appendix B**.
5. It was agreed that in order to maintain transparency, where a report would not otherwise be made available in public (such as the customer relations annual report) they would continue to be provided to the OSC until a suitable alternative could be found.

#### **Focus on requested items**

6. As a result of minimising duplication Members were able to identify a small number of items to be requested for inclusion on future agendas. This enabled more of a balance of those items that were Executive-led and those that were Committee-led. These were as follows:-
  - a. Teaching school;
  - b. Speech and language service;
  - c. Health and Wellbeing Board, scrutinising the delivery of strategic priorities for children and young people; and
  - d. Transformation of Children's Services.

#### **Focusing on outcomes and the 5-year plan**

7. Members were asked to reflect on the outcomes that had been identified for the items on the work programme. Where outcomes were not clear these were updated to reflect what Members hoped to achieve. These have been updated in light of conversations and Members are invited to continue to reflect and update these in OSC meetings in order to provide a steer for officers on the content of reports.

8. In addition to focusing on outcomes it was agreed to restructure the agenda into three sections based on the focus of the 5-year plan. Future agendas will be separated into four sections to permit a clear focus on the priorities of the 5-year plan as follows:-
  - a. cross-cutting matters;
  - b. protecting vulnerable children;
  - c. promoting children's health; and
  - d. education and skills.
  
9. In light of conversations and the principles outlined above the revised work programme is attached at **Appendix A**. The Committee is requested to consider the work programme and the indicated outcomes and to amend or add to it as necessary.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Task Forces**

10. In addition to consideration of the work programme, Members may also wish to consider how each item will be reviewed, i.e. by the Committee itself (over one or a number of Committee meetings) or by establishing a Member Task Force to review an item in greater depth and report back its findings.

### **Executive Forward Plan**

11. Listed below are those items relating specifically to this Committee's terms of reference contained in the latest version of the Executive Forward Plan. The full Executive Forward Plan can be viewed on the Council's website at the link at the end of this report.

Item	Indicative Exec Meeting date
Determination of the Proposal to Recommission Primary Specialist Provision for Autistic Spectrum Condition in Dunstable.	12 January 2016
Council's Admissions Arrangements for the Academic Year 2017/18.	12 January 2016
Non Key Decisions	Indicative Exec Meeting date
Treasury Management Strategy	12 January 2016
Draft Budget 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Plan	12 January 2016
Draft Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account 2016/17	12 January 2016
Budget 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2019/20 and HRA Plan	9 February 2016
Q3 Revenue, Capital and HRA	9 February 2016

### **Corporate Implications**

12. The work programme of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities. Whilst

there are no direct implications arising from this report the implications of proposals will be details in full in each report submitted to the Committee.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

13. Members are requested to consider and agree the attached work programme, subject to any further amendment/additions they may wish to make and highlight those items within it where they may wish to establish a Task Force to assist the Committee in its work. This will allow officers to plan accordingly but will not preclude further items being added during the course of the year if Members so wish and capacity exists.
14. Following the initial meeting to review the OSCs work programme it is intended to review this approach following the Overview and Scrutiny meeting in March 2016.

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A** Children's Services OSC Work Programme.

**Appendix B** Items being considered elsewhere that may be of interest

### **Background Papers**

Executive Forward Plan (can be viewed at any time on the Council's website) at the following link:-

<http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=577&RD=0>