

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Work Programme Review and Forward Plan

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Summary

This report is set out in two parts. The first part highlights how the work of this Committee has helped influence / shape the development of policy / decision making / performance improvement work during 2018-19 and the second part details proposals for the development of the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) and sets out the provisional work programme for the Families OSC for the municipal year 2019-20.

Annual Review

1. During 2018-19 the OSC has sought to influence and shape policy development / decision making, performance improvement work via the following routes.
2. During this period the OSC's recommendations relating to the OSC's Review of Children on the Edge of Care have been implemented, following approval by Cabinet. The OSC has monitored progress on the implementation of these recommendations at its meeting on 13 September 2018. At that stage, the OSC noted that since the Team went live in January 2018 work had been carried out to establish a baseline of practice that could be built on going forwards and it was considered that the model of work and intensity of intervention being provided to families was proving effective in driving change based on feedback provided from young people and families as well as progress made against the action plan.
3. Close partnership working with CYPS had been key to addressing the issues faced by young people and families and had provided a better understanding of risks and how these could be managed. Professional relationships had also been established with Northumberland College, Princes Trust, Safety Works and sporting establishments to meet the needs of the young people the team work with. Work was ongoing to develop relevant performance measures and outcomes and some of the areas being considered for such measures were missing episodes, education, training and employment and anti-social behavior. Work had also taken place to establish a baseline for financial savings made as a result of the work of the team and during the first six months of service delivery savings had amounted to £281,607.00. In addition, there was evidence that a number of young people had been prevented from becoming looked after children as a result of the ability of the team to respond to families' needs immediately and effective social work intervention delivered through the out of hours rapid response element of the service.

4. The OSC indicated at that time that it was satisfied with the level of progress made and the future work outlined in the recommendations from the full evaluation report. The OSC will consider a further report in relation to progress against its recommendations at its meeting in June 2019.
5. During this period the OSC has also carried out a Review of Obesity (across the life course) and will consider a report setting out its findings and recommendations at its meeting today. These recommendations will then be presented to a future Cabinet meeting for approval and, subject to these recommendations being agreed, the OSC will then monitor implementation of these recommendations during its 2019-20 work programme.
6. The OSC has monitored Council performance generally, in those areas falling within its remit, at its meetings on 14 June 2018 and 6 December 2018 and Cabinet has had regard to the OSC's views when considering Council performance overall.
7. The OSC has also monitored progress in relation to the following specific areas of performance and the OSC's comments have been fed into the improvement work progressed by relevant service areas and fed back to relevant partners.
 - CAMHS
 - Early Help Six Monthly Progress Update
 - YOT Performance Update
 - Ofsted Inspections/ School Data
 - Ofsted – Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILAC): Self Evaluation and Annual Conversation Update
 - Secondary Academies Performance – Progress Update
 - Promoting the Independence of children and young people with SEN/ learning disabilities – Progress Update
 - How Gateshead is meeting the Needs of Children and Young People with SEND – Progress Update
 - Annual Report on Complaints and Representations
 - Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers – Progress Update
 - School Exclusions -Performance Update
8. In addition, due to concerns raised by the OSC regarding the hardship the rollout of Universal Credit can cause some families, the OSC has also sought information on the support available to families in schools at its meeting on 6 December 2018 and was pleased to note that a process had been developed to fund schools to provide a Discretionary School Meal (DSM) for those children of households that had applied for Universal Credit but had not yet been awarded.
9. The OSC is due to monitor its second progress update on Early Help at the OSC meeting today.

Development of 2018-19 Work Programme

10. Every year each Overview and Scrutiny Committee draws up a work programme based on the Council's policy framework which is then agreed by the Council as part of the policy planning process.
11. The Committee's work programme is a rolling programme which sets the agenda for its six weekly meetings. It is the means by which it can address the interests of

the local community, focus on improving services and seek to reduce inequalities in service provision and access to services.

12. Under the Council's constitution the issues which will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees come from a number of sources:
 - During the year the Committee may choose to scrutinise decisions made by the Cabinet to ensure decisions are taken properly;
 - The Committee may be requested by the Cabinet to carry out reviews of particular issues in accordance with the Council's policy priorities;
 - The Committee will receive six-monthly reports on performance for comment to Cabinet;
 - The Committee will receive reports on relevant service improvement reviews at key stages of development to confirm to Cabinet that reviews are progressing appropriately;
 - Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Section 126 of the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2006 enable any member of the Council to refer to a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee any local government matter and any crime and disorder matter which affects their ward or constituents
 - Members of the Committee may identify particular issues for consideration;
 - Members may also examine issues in the Council's Forward Plan; and
 - In addition, where the Committee has reasonable concerns about a particular executive decision the call-in mechanism is available.

13. This year OSC members have been involved in shaping the focus of the work of specific OSCs via email and provided with an opportunity to comment on the emerging themes for specific OSCs at the scheduled January OSC meetings. The emerging themes have taken account of key performance issues / challenges / legislative changes affecting the work of the Council within the forthcoming twelve months which fall within the specific remits of each OSC and the 5 pledges under the Thrive agenda:-
 - Put people and families at the heart of everything that we do
 - Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance
 - Support our communities to support themselves and each other
 - Invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough.
 - Work together and fight for a better future for Gateshead

14. Subsequently, the Council has consulted partner organisations on the emerging themes for each OSC for 2019-20 and partners have indicated that they are supportive of the emerging themes.

15. The attached provisional work programme (Appendix 1) has therefore taken account of the following:-
 - Six-monthly performance reporting
 - The Thrive agenda and the Council Plan and partnership work generally
 - Current issues referred to Committees
 - Details of potential review topics/case studies
 - Legislative provisions and guidance on the Councillor Call for Action

16. The work programme remains provisional as:-

- Cabinet has not had the opportunity to fully review its work programme and it may wish to refer further issues to Overview and Scrutiny Committees for further consideration;
- It does not take account of new policy issues which may be identified during the year, which Cabinet may refer to Overview and Scrutiny; and
- It does not include issues identified by members of committees on an ongoing basis during the year as a result of scrutiny of decisions, call – in and councillor call for action.

Recommendations

17. The Committee is asked to:-

- a) Note the information contained in the annual review and provide any comments.
- b) Endorse the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's provisional work programme for 2019 - 20 attached at Appendix 1 and refer it to Council on 23 May 2019 for agreement.
- c) Note that further reports will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.

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