

Local Members Interest
N/A

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 15 June 2023

Work Programme Planning

Recommendation

- a. That the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and agree an initial list of priorities to form the basis of their work programme for 2023/24.

Report of the Scrutiny and Support Officer

1. The scrutiny structures have been designed to ensure effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's key outcomes set out in Staffordshire County Council's Strategic Plan. The Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny of:
 - Children and adults' safeguarding
 - Community safety
2. In developing a work programme the Committee is encouraged to identify issues that are a current priority for local people and communities and/or are a priority for the Council and partners. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you collectively as Councillors represent, then the likelihood is that it is something the Committee should spend time on. The more relevant the issue is to local communities then the greater the likelihood of engaging those communities in the scrutiny process and of producing outcomes that will be visible to those communities. Members are encouraged to raise and discuss issues that should form the basis of the work programme and review these periodically throughout the year to ensure they remain relevant and will add value to what the Council and partners are doing.

Report

Background

3. The Committee will lead on ensuring effective accountability of safeguards in place to protect adults and children and young people whilst scrutinising the wider community safety and localism priorities. The Committee is the designated crime and disorder committee. This is

distinct from the role of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, who are responsible for scrutinising the decisions of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, but to whom it may refer matters.

Developing the Work Programme

4. This meeting is an opportunity for the Committee to begin to identify and prioritise what it wishes to scrutinise during the current municipal year. Officers and Cabinet Members will be present at the meeting to outline the County Council's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, public protection and localism, and highlighting priorities for the Council going forward.
5. When agreeing matters for your work programme you are encouraged to ask the following questions:
 - Is the matter of particular concern to local people?
 - Is the issue an identified priority for the County Council or partners?
 - Does the issue relate to an area of service with a trend in weak performance? For example, has this issue been identified by external auditors or inspectors?
 - What difference could scrutiny make?
 - What would happen if you did not look at this issue?

Matters Arising from Last Year's Work Programme

6. Areas that were highlighted for further work during the last municipal year are:
 - Safeguarding concerns of permanently excluded pupils, an item was considered by Members at their 20 April meeting, with further work identified;
 - Meeting with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to consider progress following the PEEL report;
 - Family Hub, including the Early Help Strategy;
 - Online abuse and grooming;
 - Work of the SSCB Child Exploitation Sub-group;
 - Partnership approaches to early help and emotional and behavioural support;
 - Impact of the new PSHE Co-ordinator 12 months on (scheduled for 27 July agenda)
 - Children's Transformation
 - Ofsted Action Plan - progress

Recurring Work Programme Items

Complaints and Representations Annual Report – Children’s Services. Children’s services are required to submit an annual report on complaints and representations to the relevant County Council Committee. Trends in complaints are used to inform the Scrutiny Committee’s work programme.

Complaints and Representations Annual Report – Adults’ Services. Whilst there is not a statutory obligation for Adults’ Services to submit a report to a County Council Committee, the ‘safeguarding’ scrutiny committee has scrutinised this report on an annual basis. Trends in complaints are used to inform the Scrutiny Committee’s work programme.

Annual Report of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board. The Committee considers this report on an annual basis for comment.

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The Committee considers the Board’s Annual for comment.

Outcomes from inspections. Adults and children’s services are subject to a programme of announced/unannounced inspections throughout the year. The Committee will be updated on the outcomes from inspections and Members may be required to contribute to them.

Meeting with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The Committee has the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Commissioner specifically in regard to community safety. The Chairman is copied into the agenda and minutes of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and every effort is made to ensure that the Committee is not duplicating the work of the Panel.

Training and development

7. Training and development sessions will be run for Members as required. Members are invited to make any suggestions for development to the Chair or the Scrutiny and Support Officer.

Link to the Strategic Plan

8. The remits of the Council’s Overview & Scrutiny Committees link to the strategic priorities set out in the County Council Strategic Plan. Work

programmes should link to community priorities or strategic outcomes if they are to deliver noticeable outcomes for local communities and the organisation.

Implications

9. The County Council has a responsibility to undertake adequate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services do not have a negative impact on any one section of the community and the scrutiny committees have a role in ensuring that this responsibility is fulfilled. Scrutiny as a function must also comply with the relevant legislation. When considering work programme items, especially when undertaking reviews of policy, the scrutiny committees must always consider whether their recommendations may impact differently on various individuals/sections of the community.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Draft Work Programme 2023/24

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