

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release

Meeting: Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13th June 2006

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: Draft Annual Workplan for CYP Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Ward(s) affected: All

The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 19, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the 1972 Local Government Act as amended (items not to be considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) are that that it was not possible to prepare the report earlier and it would be desirable not to delay the matter until a later meeting as it is proposed in the report to establish a working group to develop the annual workplan.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider an annual workplan for the Committee.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To agree the basis of a workplan, as set out in paragraph 3.2 to 3.5 below.

2.2 To nominate a small sub-group of members to work with officers from the Committee Section and the Children & Young People's Trust to produce a draft plan for approval at the next meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYPOSC) is a new committee charged with exercising the Council's overview and scrutiny function in respect of Children's Services. This subsumes the work of the previous Education Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Children's Social Care Scrutiny function of the Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee, and the scrutiny of children's healthcare services hitherto carried out by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Its main interlocutor in terms of the executive function is the Children and Young People's Trust Board, which is the senior decision making body for all children's services in the city.
- 3.2 The functions of scrutiny can be broadly split into three categories:
- (i) Monitoring of service performance
 - (ii) Scrutiny of executive decision making (with call-in powers as necessary)
 - (iii) Policy advice

3.3 **(i) Monitoring of Service Performance**

Service performance is monitored and reported on through a number of mechanisms. The regular performance management arrangements generate quarterly and annual reports on performance indicators and targets for all areas of the service, and these have historically always been reported both to the relevant executive committee and to Scrutiny. Under this heading EOSP also received summaries of all school and service inspection reports, and audits carried out by the Council's internal audit service. There is also the possibility of picking out an individual area of service and requesting a performance report on it for more in-depth discussion of issues which might be causing particular concern.

It is proposed that the annual workplan for CYPOSC should include regularly scheduled performance monitoring, plus a rolling programme of more in-depth scrutiny of areas of service which might need more detailed attention.

3.4 **(ii) Scrutiny of Executive Decision Making**

There have been a number of examples over the past five years where decisions made by the Executive have been scrutinised, leading to changes or improvements in policy or the

implementation of policy. These include scrutinies carried out by EOSP into the Comart 'Fresh Start', the school admission arrangements, the schools PFI project, procedures in place for outdoor pursuits, and the staff protocols relating to school closures and mergers. There has also been one example of a decision called in by EOSP. Where a scrutiny has been agreed, the relevant scrutiny committee generally commissions a sub-group to do the scrutiny on its behalf, and receives regular progress reports.

By their nature, scrutinies and call-in requests cannot be planned into an annual workplan at the outset, but it is proposed that space is left on the agenda at each meeting to allow scrutiny requests to be discussed as they arise.

3.5 (iii) Policy advice

It is important that any scrutiny committee is enabled to do its job by being briefed on emerging and developing policy issues, so that it can offer its advice to the executive decision making committees (in this case the CYPT Board). In the case of Children's Services, the CYPOSC would, as a matter of course, be consulted on the Children and Young People's Plan and associated policies. It would also have an important role in considering the impact of new government policies on the local service, and either responding to consultations in its own right, or contributing to a Board response. In the case of Health Scrutiny, this has statutory force in terms of the Council's role in relation to the local NHS.

It is proposed that the annual workplan for CYPOSC should include a forward look at key policies as they are likely to emerge, and that each meeting should include at least one paper on a key policy issue facing the CYPT, so that CYPOSC can cement its advisory role in the way outlined above.

4. Consultation

4.1 None.

5. Contact officer

5.1 David Hawker, Director of Children's Services, Tel: 01273 293434.

COMMITTEE REPORT APPENDIX



Meeting/Date	Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 13 th June 2006
Report of	Director of Children's Services
Subject	Draft Annual Workplan for CYP Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Wards affected	All

<p>Financial implications All costs are covered by the corporate committee budget.</p>
<p>Legal implications Formulation of a workplan will assist the Committee in discharging the overview and scrutiny functions delegated to it by the Council.</p> <p><i>Lawyer consulted: John Heys Date: 6th June 2006</i></p>

<p>Corporate/Citywide implications City –wide implications – Maintaining an effective scrutiny function is an important feature of a healthy local democracy. A published annual workplan will give the public important information on how the scrutiny function is protecting the interests of the whole local community.</p>	<p>Risk assessment No formal risk assessment has been carried out.</p>
<p>Sustainability implications An effective scrutiny function provides an important element of assurance that the Council and its partners are acting according to their published policies in these areas.</p>	<p>Equalities implications An effective scrutiny function provides an important element of assurance that the Council and its partners are acting according to their published policies in these areas.</p>
<p>Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder An effective scrutiny function provides an important element of assurance that the Council and its partners are acting according to their published policies in these areas.</p>	

COMMITTEE REPORT APPENDIX



Background papers

None.

Contact Officer

David Hawker, Director of Children's Services Tel: 01273 293434