

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	26 January 2021
Subject:	Work Programme 2020/21, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Children, Schools and Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To review the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21; to report on progress of the Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group; to report on progress of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group; to identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan; and to receive an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) the completion of the Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group review be noted;
- (3) the progress of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group be noted;
- (4) items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan that fall under the remit of the Committee, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be considered and any agreed items be included in the work programme referred to in (1) above; and
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2020/21; to report on progress of the working group established by the Committee; to identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny “adds value” to the Council; and to comply with a decision of the Committee to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues before making formal decisions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify scrutiny review topics.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None
Legal Implications: None
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. Reference in the Work Programme to any other reports could impact on the Council’s Core Purposes, in which case they will be referred to in the report when submitted.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As Above
Commission, broker and provide core services: As Above
Place – leadership and influencer: As Above
Drivers of change and reform: As Above
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As Above
Greater income for social investment: As Above
Cleaner Greener: As Above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Work Programme Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the Work Programme report will be included in those reports as appropriate.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Appendix A - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2020/21;
- Appendix B – Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

- 1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21 is attached at **Appendix A** to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.
- 1.2 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2020/21 and updated, as appropriate.
- 1.3 **The Committee is requested to comment on the Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/21, as appropriate, and note that additional items may be submitted to the Programme at future meetings of the Committee during this Municipal Year.**

2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC(S) - PERSISTENT PUPIL ABSENCE WORKING GROUP

- 2.1 At the meeting on 9 July 2019, the Committee established a Working Group to review the topic of persistent pupil absence in schools. Councillors Bennett, Carragher (Lead Member), Keith and Mrs. Sandra Cain, Independent Advisory Member, have been appointed to the Working Group.
- 2.2 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Working Group was not been able to meet after February 2020 until October 2020.
- 2.3 At the time of drafting this report it is anticipated that the Final Report of the Working Group will appear elsewhere on the agenda for the meeting.
- 2.4 **The Committee is requested to note that the Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group has completed its review.**

3. HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 At the last meeting of the Committee held on 10 November 2020, the Chair reported that Members of the Committee would be invited to serve on the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group, established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills), and a copy of the draft Scoping Document would be circulated to Members to aid them in their deliberations on this matter.
- 3.2 The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Murphy, has agreed to serve on the Working Group. Councillor Doyle, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health) has also agreed to serve on the Working Group.
- 3.3 Councillors Janis Blackburne, Dave Robinson and Anne Thompson, from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills), have agreed to be Members of the Working Group. A summary of activity is outlined below:

Meeting Date	Activity
4 December 2020	The Working Group appointed Councillor Robinson as its Lead Member; and approved its Scoping Document to review the topic of housing support services provided to vulnerable people by non-governmental organisations and charities and their links to statutory agencies covered by the Communities and Housing portfolio. This is a wide-ranging topic and will include looking at accommodation and support services provided to Asylum Seekers, Syrian Refugees, those fleeing domestic violence and vulnerable homeless households. A meeting will be held shortly to appoint

	the Lead member and approve the scoping document and commence the review
22 January 2021	The Working Group will consider information on the scale and location in Sefton of supported accommodation for the cohorts of vulnerable people within the scope of this review; the comments raised by Members in their deliberation on the Scoping Document for example, details of the Serco contract specification with the home Office; and profiles of service users in relation to age, gender, children; and the support services commissioned by the Council and the accommodation related to those services; and the associated support service specifications.

3.3 The Committee is requested to note the progress of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group.

4. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

4.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan, which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four-month period.

4.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

4.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.

4.4 The latest Forward Plan published on 23 December 2020 is attached at **Appendix B** for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.

4.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.

4.6 The Committee is invited to consider items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan, as set out in Appendix B to the report, that fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above.

5. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5.1 During the October/November 2019 cycle of meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a

report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny. This Committee considered the matter at its meeting held on 15 October 2019 (Minute No. 32 refers).

5.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

5.3 In accordance with the above decision, information on the LCRCAO&S is set out below.

5.4 **Role**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established by the Combined Authority in May 2017 in accordance with the Combined Authorities Order 2017.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a "critical friend" to policy and strategy development;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority's strategic plan.

5.5 **Membership**

The Committee is made up of 3 elected Members from each of the constituent Local Authorities of the LCR Combined Authority, along with one elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

Sefton's appointed Members are Councillors Dowd and Howard. Councillor Dowd is Sefton's Scrutiny Link. At the time of drafting this report, there is currently one vacancy for Sefton.

Councillors Pugh and Sir Ron Watson are the respective representatives of the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

5.6 **Chair**

The Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be a Member of the majority group. Councillor Thomas Crone, a Green Party Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council was appointed Chair for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

5.7 **Quoracy Issues**

A high number of meetings of the LCRCAO&S have been inquorate in the past.

The quorum for meetings of the LCRCAO&S is 14, two-thirds of the total number of members, 20. This high threshold is not set by the Combined Authority but is set out in legislation.

The Combined Authority's Monitoring Officer will be looking to work with the Monitoring Officers from the other Combined Authorities to identify what problems they are experiencing with Scrutiny and how/if they had overcome them. Representations to Government would also be considered once all options locally to resolve the quorum issue had been exhausted. The CA Monitoring Officer would then be able to provide evidence to Government that the quorum level was obstructing the work of scrutiny within the CA.

Remote meetings appear to have assisted with the quorum issue.

5.8 Meetings

Information on all meetings and membership of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained using the following link:

<https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=365&Year=0>

14 January 2021

The most recent meeting of the LCRCA O&S, the budget meeting, was held on 14 January 2021, remotely, and the meeting was quorate. The LCRCA O&S was asked to consider the following business:

- Apologies for Absence;
- Declarations of Interest;
- Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 4 November 2020;
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Budget 2021/22;
- Public Engagement at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- Any Other Business.

The Minutes of the above meeting will be made available using the link referred to above, in due course.

At the time of drafting this report, the next meeting of the LCRCA O&S is scheduled to be held on 10 March 2021 and will be held remotely. The agenda for the meeting will be made available using the link referred to above, in due course.

Details of all meetings can be obtained using the link referred to above.

5.9 ***The Committee is requested to note the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.***