

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	12 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Work Programme 2023/24, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Children's Social Care Education		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

### Summary:

To:

- seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24;
- to identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan;
- note the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2023/24;
- note the training proposals available from the Local Government Association and in-house;
- note that the topic of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has previously been approved as a potential item for in-depth scrutiny during 2023/24; and
- to receive an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Recommendations:

That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;
- (2) items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit of the Committee, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be considered and any agreed items be included in the work programme referred to in (1) above;
- (3) the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2023/24, as set out at Appendix B be noted;

- (4) the training proposals available from the Local Government Association and in-house be noted;
- (5) It be noted that the topic of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has previously been approved for in-depth scrutiny by Members of the Committee during 2023/24 and relevant activities are included in the schedule of the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2023/24, as set out at Appendix B; and
- (6) 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 2023/24; 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:**

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b> None
<b>Legal Implications:</b> None
<b>Equality Implications:</b> There are no equality implications.
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b> Yes
Any direct implications on the impact on children and young people are set out within

the report.

**Climate Emergency Implications:**

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes

There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.

**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 - Work Programme for 2023/24;
- Appendix B – Informal Workshops / Site Visits 2023/24
- Appendix C – 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 2023/24**

- 1.1 The Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee during the Municipal Year 2023/24 is set out 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 2023/24 and reviewed/updated, as appropriate.
- 1.3 During the 2022/23 Municipal Year, the Committee agreed the following items for consideration during 2023/24:
  - Representatives of the Police and other Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team members be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee (Minute No. 59 (2) (a) of 06/03/23 refers). This has been arranged for the meeting on 12 March 2024.
- 1.5 **The Committee is requested to comment on the Work Programme for 2023/24, as appropriate, and note that additional items may be added to the Programme during the next Municipal Year.**

## **2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS / INFORMAL MEETINGS / BRIEFING SESSIONS 2023/24**

- 2.1 The Committee has agreed to hold informal briefing sessions, as and when required, rather than establish a traditional working group, during 2023/24.
- 2.2 A schedule of the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2023/24, is set out at Appendix B.
- 2.3 The schedule will be updated during the Municipal Year as sessions take place.
- 2.4 **The Committee is requested to comment on the schedule of informal activities to be undertaken during 2023/24 and note that additional items may be added to the schedule at future meetings of the Committee in the next Municipal Year, 2024/25.**

## **3. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The latest Forward Plan published on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024, for the four-month period 1 April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, contains no key decisions that fall under the remit of the Committee, on this occasion.
- 3.5 There are 2 items within the current Plan that falls under the remit of the Committee on this occasion, namely:
  - Approval of Legal Documentation for Academy Conversions
  - Adoption in Merseyside
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 The Committee is invited to consider items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix C to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above.

#### **4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION / IN-HOUSE – TRAINING PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 During 2023/24, the Council has secured a commitment for the Local Government Association (LGA) to provide training for Members of the Committee, as outlined within the paragraphs below.

##### **Dedicated support for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding)**

Workshop sessions have been organised and delivered as outlined within the table below:

<b>Session</b>	<b>Dates – in person (6.00 - 8.00 pm) Bootle Town Hall</b>
Session 1  Introduction to children’s scrutiny and work programming.	Tuesday, 30 May 2023
Session 2  Recap on Session 1, engagement and working with others.	Tuesday, 25 July 2023
Session 3  Demonstrating value and influence and creating a strong organisational culture.	Monday, 2 October 2023

##### **Support for Members of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Two alternative training sessions for all O&S Committee Members have been held on Thursday, 15 June 2023, in Bootle Town Hall from 3.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. and from 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

##### **Support for all Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs**

##### **Mentor Support for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding)**

Arrangements have been made and support is on-going.

##### **All Member Corporate Parenting Briefing**

The Council’s Corporate Parenting Officer is providing in-house mandatory Corporate Parenting training, as in previous years.

Four alternative one-hour briefing sessions have been arranged remotely via Microsoft Teams during 2023/24. Four sessions have been held to date, as follows:

- Monday, 19 June 2023, 2.00 p.m.
- Tuesday, 11 July 2023, 5.00 p.m.
- Wednesday, 1 November 2023, 6.30 p.m.
- Wednesday, 24 January 2024, 4.00 p.m.

**4.3 The Committee is requested to note the training proposals available from the Local Government Association and in-house.**

## **5. WORK PROGRAMMING / MATTERS ARISING FROM THE TRAINING SESSION HELD ON 11 JULY 2023**

5.1 Members and Substitutes were invited to attend an informal work programming session prior to the meeting of the Committee on 6 June 2023.

5.2 A further an informal work programming session took place prior to the training session held 11 July 2023.

5.3 The following three topics were narrowed down as potential items for in-depth scrutiny during 2023/24, and discussed at the training session held on 11 July 2023:

- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Health Inequalities
- Child Protection and Safeguarding

5.4 As SEND was the topic that appeared to raise the most concerns amongst Members, it is proposed that this is identified as a potential item for in-depth scrutiny during 2023/24,

**5.5 That it be noted that the topic of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has previously been approved for in-depth scrutiny by Members of the Committee during 2023/24 and relevant activities are included in the schedule of the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2023/24, as set out at Appendix B.**

## **6. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

6.1 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).

6.2 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.

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

#### 6.4 **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.

#### 6.5 **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 Desmond, Hart and Howard (Scrutiny Link).

The LCR O&S Committee also include Representatives of the Liberal Democrat Groups and Conservative Groups from the Local Authorities on the LCR O&S.

#### 5.6 **Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be a Member of the majority group. The Chair is appointed at the first meeting of the Committee of the 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.

## 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>

## 5.9 **Latest Meeting – 28 February 2024**

Matters considered at the meeting related to the following items:

- Verbal update from Mayor Steve Rotherham
- Progress update on the LCR Combined Authority Five Year Climate Action Plan
- Work Programme Update

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

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