

# MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

## CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

### SETTING THE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017

**5 JULY 2016**

#### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year.

#### BACKGROUND

2. At the start of every municipal year, scrutiny panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year.
3. Work programmes are useful as they provide some structure to a scrutiny panel's activity and allow for the effective planning and preparation of work.
4. As part of the process for establishing the work programme, support officers gather information/views from a number of sources. Below is a list of topics which are anticipated to be of particular interest to the scrutiny panel. Members are advised that the list of possible topics is not exhaustive and that additional topics can be added and considered at the scrutiny panel meeting.

#### Topical issues and suggestions

<b>Giving children the best start in life</b>	On 1 October 2015, the commissioning responsibilities for the 0-5 public health nursing services transferred to the local authority. Therefore, there is a need to establish the opportunities and challenges this presents.
<b>Good practice in school readiness</b>	In 2014, Ofsted published good practice guidance that details how the most successful early years providers ensure disadvantaged and vulnerable children are better prepared for school.
<b>The council's role in school place planning</b>	In 2014, the Local Government Association published a document: The council's role in school place planning - making sure there are enough places locally. In 2015, media releases stated that two in five council areas could have more primary pupils ready to start school than places for them by September 2016.
<b>How Councillors can influence local education?</b>	In 2013, the Local Government Association and the Centre for Public Scrutiny published a guidance document on ways for scrutiny to influence local education and support school leaders to improve results. In 2015, a subsequent document was published in respect of using community leadership to improve schools. The document also presents a case for strengthening links between local councillors and schools.

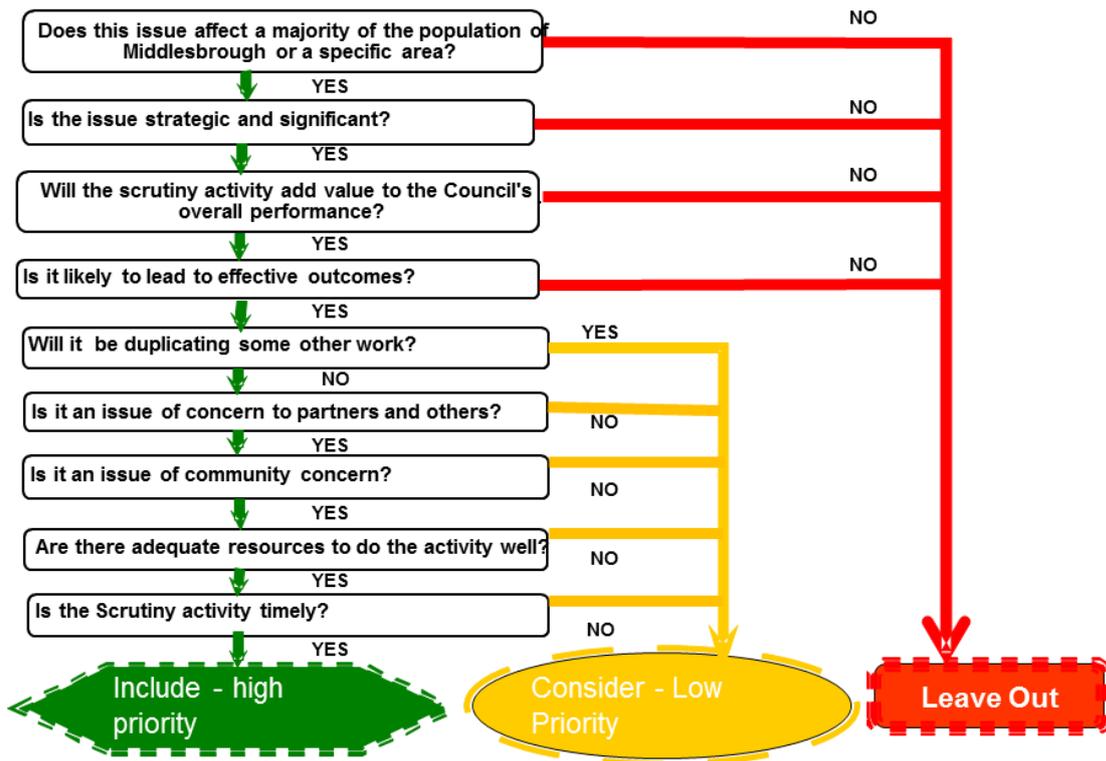
<b>Keeping children safe in education</b>	In 2015, the Department for Education published guidance regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in schools and colleges.
<b>Promoting a positive body image in schools</b>	In 2015, Ofsted published a best practice example. Oak Cottage Primary School developed a body image programme to increase teachers', parents', carers' and pupils' awareness of body image and how images portrayed in the media can impact on how pupils view themselves and others.
<b>The prevention of childhood obesity in schools</b>	In 2015, the Gazette published an article stating that figures show Teesside primary school children were measured weighing over 16 stone. In Middlesbrough, two children weighing 16.1 stone and 16.2 stone were recorded in 2011/12.
<b>Post-16 education</b>	In 2015, the Local Government Association published a media release stating that thousands of teenagers were dropping out of school or college, or failing to achieve a pass grade, at a cost of more than £800 million to the public purse each year.
<b>Preparing learners with learning disabilities for work</b>	In 2014, Ofsted published a best practice example. High standards, high expectations and outstanding collaborations with employers ensure that many learners with learning difficulties at Foxes Academy are prepared exceptionally well for their progress into paid, supported or voluntary work.
<b>Support for those with special educational needs and disability</b>	In 2014, the Department for Education published guidance for parents and carers in respect of how a new system, which supports children and young people with SEN or disabilities and parents is intended to work. The new system was introduced on 1 September 2014.
<b>A comparison of how each school spends the Pupil Premium and why</b>	A document was published in 2014 by the Teaching Schools Council and Sir John Dunford, Pupil Premium Champion. The document entitled Effective Pupil Premium Reviews provides guidance on using an evidence-based approach to assess how a school is spending its pupil premium funding and identify the most effective interventions and overall strategy.
<b>Review of the role and functions of the Local Safeguarding Children Board</b>	In 2016, the Department for Education produced a document entitled the Wood Review. The fundamental review investigated the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) within the context of local strategic multi-agency working.
<b>The skills agenda. Are education providers offering qualifications and training for young people, which match the requirements of future employers?</b>	The topic of the skills agenda was raised during a discussion with Council partners at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 9 January 2015.
<b>Safeguarding measures in place to meet the complex needs of children who suffer paediatric neuro-disability following a brain injury</b>	Suggestion from Chair of Matrix Neurological.

<b>Local authority support for kinship carers</b>	Member suggestion and also a suggestion from the Chairman of Middlesbrough Kinship Carers' Group.
<b>School catering</b>	Member suggestion.
<b>Youth unemployment</b>	Member suggestion.
<b>Careers advice/service</b>	Member suggestion.
<b>Updates on previous reviews</b>	In respect of previous reviews, the scrutiny panel can request updates on the progress made with the implementation of scrutiny recommendations. Following discussion at the panel meeting on 6 April 2016, it was agreed that a further update is required in respect of Child Poverty, Deprivation and Attainment.

5. It should be noted that the suggested topics outlined above are exactly that, suggestions. The content of the scrutiny panel's work programme is entirely a decision for the panel to make. When considering the work programme, the panel is advised to select topics that are of interest to it, as well as topics that the panel feels by considering, it could add value to the local authority's work.
6. In addition to undertaking the agreed work programme, scrutiny panels have also previously responded on an ad-hoc basis to emerging issues - such as considering relevant new legislation, guidance or Government consultation documents. This approach occasionally results in further topics being identified for investigation or review throughout the year.
7. On occasion ad-hoc scrutiny panels may also be established throughout the year to undertake additional investigations, for example to examine areas of work which overlap more than one scrutiny panel.
8. The scrutiny panel is also advised that, under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities have a responsibility of community leadership and a power to secure the effective promotion of community well-being. Therefore, in addition to the scrutiny panel's generally recognised powers (of holding the Executive to account, reviewing service provision, developing policy, considering budget plans and performance and financial monitoring), panels also have the power to consider **any** matters which are not the responsibility of the Council but which affect the local authority **or** the inhabitants of its area. For example, nationally, local authorities have undertaken scrutiny work on issues such as post office closures, rural bus services, policing matters and flood defence schemes.

### **Scrutiny work plan prioritisation aid**

9. Members may wish to use the aid overleaf to prioritise issues where scrutiny can make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development.



## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

10. The scrutiny panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year. To assist in this task, Richenda Broad (Executive Director for Wellbeing, Care and Learning) will be in attendance to provide an overview of the main services within the scrutiny panel's remit and an outline of priorities, key issues and challenges for the year ahead.
11. When considering its work programme, the scrutiny panel is asked to ensure that topics agreed for inclusion:
  - Affect a group of people living within the Middlesbrough area.
  - Relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence.
  - Are not issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board or the scrutiny panels have considered during the last 12 months.
  - Do not relate to an individual service complaint; and
  - Do not relate to matters dealt with by another Council committee, unless the issue deals with procedure.
12. It is suggested that the scrutiny panel has a mixture of working styles in its programme. This can include detailed and in-depth reviews, shorter topics, or one-off investigations.
13. Once the scrutiny panel has identified the areas of priority, support staff will draw those topics into a programme for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

14. That the scrutiny panel identifies the topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2016/17, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15. Throughout the report, reference is made to documents published by the BBC, the Centre for Public Scrutiny, the Department for Education, the Department of Health, the Gazette, the Local Government Association, Ofsted and the Teaching Schools Council.

Contact Officer  
Georgina Moore  
Scrutiny Support Officer  
Democratic Services  
Tel: 01642 729711  
Email: [georgina\\_moore@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:georgina_moore@middlesbrough.gov.uk)