

MEETING:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	11 DECEMBER 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT BY:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To consider the Committee's work programme.

Recommendation

THAT

- a) the Committee consider how it wishes to take forward the Strategic Monitoring Committee's request that it gives priority to the scrutiny of Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Youth Provision issues;
- b) the Committee re-examine the current work programme to ensure that matters listed for future consideration remain appropriate subjects for scrutiny; and
- b) subject to any other comment or issues raised by the Committee the Committee work programme be approved and reported to the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

Introduction and Background

1. As reported to this Committee in September, work has been ongoing in response to the findings of the external healthcheck of the scrutiny function, undertaken by the Leadership Centre. Members of the Scrutiny Committees and the Executive participated in a facilitated scrutiny event to develop an enhanced external focus to the scrutiny committee work programme reflecting the concerns of residents and communities of Herefordshire. After considering the challenges facing the County and key issues identified from public consultation and surveys Members identified the following five priorities for scrutiny: Housing related issues; Youth; Communication; Safeguarding and Transport related issues.

2. At a formal meeting of Strategic Monitoring Committee on 19 October 2009 the Committee agreed that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee be requested to give priority to the issues of Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Youth Provision issues in its work programme.
3. The Committee did not discuss this topic in detail but noted the following points from the Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey 2008:
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Children – one of the improvements the public most wanted to see is more support for families to protect vulnerable children. It is also identified by the Council as a key issue in Herefordshire.
 - Youth Provision – Activities for teenagers are the second most important thing that needs improving.
5. It is important that any scrutiny work makes a real contribution to the Council's work and does not duplicate any action already in hand.
6. Members will note from this agenda that Safeguarding Vulnerable Children has already been the subject of a seminar for all Councillors and is the subject of a report earlier in this agenda. Youth Provision is already scheduled for a seminar in January with the Committee debating the issues arising from the seminar at its March 2010 meeting.
7. The Committee will need to consider the extent to which it wishes to scrutinise these issues or aspects of them, and the appropriate method of scrutiny (briefing note / committee report / spotlight review / longer review) and the priority they should be given when considering the other issues currently scheduled for future consideration.
8. A report on the Committee's current work programme is made to each scheduled meeting of this Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the work programme is attached as an Appendix.
9. The programme may be modified by the Chairman following consultation with the Vice-Chairman and the Directors in response to changing circumstances.
10. Should any urgent, prominent or high profile issue arise, the Chairman may consider calling an additional meeting to consider that issue.
11. A number of other possible issues for consideration have been logged and depending on the Committee's further instructions may be added to the programme as it is further developed. These issues are listed at the foot of the programme.
12. Strategic Monitoring Committee on 19 October also requested that all Scrutiny Committees re-examine their current work programmes to ensure that matters listed for future consideration remain appropriate subjects for scrutiny.
13. Should Members become aware of any issues they consider may be added to the scrutiny programme they should contact the Democratic Services Officer to log the issue so that it may be taken into consideration when planning future agendas or when revising the work programme.

Background Papers

- None identified.