

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Work- Programme for 2009/10

Work programme

Existing commitments

On Tuesday 14th July 2009 the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish two Working Groups.

1. One is a joint working group with the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a recent report on Reducing Teenage Conceptions in Oxfordshire. This working group met on 13 August 2009 to discuss its remit and determine a work programme.
2. The second is a working group to further review work on Educational Attainment. This group met on 28 August 2009, but work is pending the full committee's decision to review membership.

Future work

At the committee meeting on 14 July 2009 members identified a significant number of proposals for future work. Officers have completed proposal forms for these ideas, and these are attached for information.

The Recommendation is that the committee may wish to hold select committees on three of the proposed items:

1. "Young people's transition into employment" combined with "Dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council"
2. "Links between Oxfordshire Schools and the Science Community"
3. "Anti-bullying"

These three suggestions stood out for their relevance to current priorities and the advantageous timing a review for this year's work programme.

It is further recommended that the committee may wish to prioritise the remaining 9 ideas, initial for a Q&A.

List of possible Q &As for committee to prioritise

Proposal	Notes
Children's Centres	
Children's Trust	
Permanent Exclusions	
SUCCESS Project	The approach for this item was suggested as a Q&A by the Committee at the 14 th July Meeting.
Why do parents remove their children from Oxfordshire schools at age 11?	
What is the impact on Oxfordshire schools of children moving there from independent schools as a result of the recession?	
Religious Education in Schools	The Committee might need to clarify what questions it has on Religious Education
Youth Services	
Do students have a guarantee to non-faith schools?	This is not included as a proposal as it could be explained in a staff brief of presentation.
Impact of reduction of central service resources on schools	This is not included as a proposal as it relates to the work in Star Chamber. This will be clarified after the service and resource planning process.

Scrutiny proposal form

Dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council, Transitioning Young People into Employment, Reducing NEETS.

Section 1 – To be completed by member/officer proposing review

1. Who raised this issue?

This was suggested in a work programme discussion at the 14 July Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

2. Purpose of scrutinising this issue

To assess the effectiveness of programmes the council provides for preparing young people for employment in light of the dissolution of the learning and skills council and upcoming statutory changes. A major upcoming shift to require all 16-18 year olds to 'participate in learning' is set to become fully effective in 2015. These young people could still be participating in the workplace as approximately 10-15% of them currently do, but that work must have an apprenticeship (or other learning) component. The scrutiny work would challenge the directorate on the plans they are developing to ensure that the capacity to have all these young people in learning (as will be required by law) is in place.

3. Recommendation

Recommended for further review. This issue is recommended as a select committee.

Section 2 : To be completed by the scrutiny team

CONTEXT

4. Which of our partners/stakeholders does this issue effect?

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, The Further Education Colleges, Voluntary Providers, Job Centre Plus, 14-19 Strategy Group, Children's Trust

5. Who has been consulted about the upstream importance of this scrutiny item?

Sandra Higgs, Strategic Lead 14-19 Strategy, Children Young People and Families Directorate

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. Which corporate objective would this scrutiny item address?

World Class Economy

- Workforce skills – we have a key role in raising skills levels and aspirations to ensure all residents can contribute to and benefit from economic success. We have long established a Learning and Skills Partnership and are working with them to address our skills needs. The transfer of responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities provides further opportunities and challenges. There is also a County Council apprenticeship scheme up and running.
- We have also led on the development of a new strategic Learning & Skills Partnership which brings together business people and commissioners/providers of skills and learning to agree and fund priorities.
- Educational Attainment – further improving educational attainment is a key political priority. We are working closely with schools to improve educational success to ensure young people from all our communities achieve their potential and leave school with the skills required for further education, employment and training.

7. Which Action Plan item from the Children and Young People's Plan would this address?

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

- reduce the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training or in jobs with no training;
- ensure that young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are properly prepared and supported for transition to post 16 education, training or employment; that there is appropriate provision which meets their needs and that they receive impartial information, advice and guidance.

8. Which Local Area Agreement target would this item address and how are we currently performing against this target (if applicable)?

NI117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training, or employment.

Concurrent Work

12. Is this issue identified in the relevant directorate's business plan?

Yes, in the Educational Attainment Business Plan

13. What work is concurrently being undertaken to address this issue?

The directorate is currently working through the 14-19 Strategy Group to anticipate the change in law. They work with the private sector to help identify working arrangements for young people which will satisfy the 'learning' requirement as well as to anticipate the impact these changes might have on the existing section of the labour market. In conjunction with this, the authority has been transitioning the role of the Learning and Skills Council which is shifting its remit to local authorities.

14. What value would the scrutiny committee add to this work?

Once the law is in effect, 16-19 year olds will be required to have a suitable learning placement. At the moment, the capacity is not there to accommodate everyone. Scrutiny work would highlight this important transition, challenge the directorate as they make plans to meet the legal obligations and help to anticipate knock-on effects this shift may have on other parts of the economy and workforce.

Resources

15. Which scrutiny committees does this issue relate to?

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

16. What resource commitment would be needed to effectively scrutinise the item?

A select committee or working group would need an assigned officer to help manage this project.

17. What impact would allocating resources to this item have on the overall scrutiny work programme?

If this item were prioritised, it would necessarily limit the resources available for other potential areas of scrutiny the committee could consider.

Recommendation

This item is recommended for a select committee.

Decision of relevant Scrutiny Committee

Decision of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group

Scrutiny proposal form

Linking the Science Community to Oxfordshire Schools

Section 1 – To be completed by member/officer proposing review

1. Who raised this issue?

This was suggested in a work programme discussion at the 14 July Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

2. Purpose of scrutinising this issue

To assess the effectiveness of programmes run by the council in linking county schools to the local science community and to provide ways this link might be expanded and strengthened.

3. Recommendation

Recommended for further review by select committee.

Section 2 : To be completed by the scrutiny team

CONTEXT

4. Which of our partners/stakeholders does this issue effect?

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, The Further Education Colleges, Schools, Science Vale UK Partnership, and other private sector partners.

5. Who has been consulted about the upstream importance of this scrutiny item?

John Evans, School Improvement Lead and Science Advisor for the Authority, Children Young People and Families

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. Which corporate objective would this scrutiny item address?

World Class Economy

- Economic development – working with partners to develop a new economic strategy for the county...fulfilling the potential of the Science Vale UK area as an internationally known centre for innovation and enterprise through the Science Vale UK Partnership.
- We have also led on the development of a new strategic Learning & Skills Partnership which brings together business people and commissioners/providers of skills and learning

to agree and fund priorities.

- Educational Attainment – further improving educational attainment is a key political priority. We are working closely with schools to improve educational success to ensure young people from all our communities achieve their potential and leave school with the skills required for further education, employment and training.

7. Which Action Plan item from the Children and Young People's Plan would this address?

Enjoy and Achieve

- raising standards of educational achievement and enjoyment at all key stages
- ensuring that all schools are successful in helping pupils to have high aspirations and to make progress in line with their potential
- ensuring that all pupils leave school with a good standard of education and the qualifications, including vocational qualifications, needed for further education, employment or training

8. Which Local Area Agreement target would this item address and how are we currently performing against this target (if applicable)?

NI 083 Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3

Concurrent Work

12. Is this issue identified in the relevant directorate's business plan?

Yes (see above)

13. What work is concurrently being undertaken to address this issue?

Oxfordshire as a county arguably enjoys the largest base of scientists and technology for all of western Europe. There are enormous opportunities to tap into this unique and valuable resource as a way to further the educational attainment of young people in Oxfordshire schools. The county currently runs several programmes to link the local scientists and scientific institutions to school programmes to enhance educational opportunities and increase young people's enthusiasm for science. They have also been liaising with local science employers to identify ways in which there are skills gaps in the current workforce that improved science education could help meet.

14. What value would the scrutiny committee add to this work?

Scrutiny work on this topic could assess the total reach and effectiveness of current efforts and develop ways to enhance and expand partnerships.

Resources

15. Which scrutiny committees does this issue relate to?

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

16. What resource commitment would be needed to effectively scrutinise the item?

A select committee or working group would need an assigned officer to help with managing the project.

17. What impact would allocating resources to this item have on the overall scrutiny work programme?

If this item were prioritised, it would necessarily limit the resources available for other potential areas of scrutiny the committee could consider.

Recommendation

Recommended for further review by select committee.

Decision of relevant Scrutiny Committee

Decision of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group

Scrutiny proposal form

Anti-bullying

Section 1 – To be completed by member/officer proposing review

1. Who raised this issue?

This was suggested in a work programme discussion at the 14 July Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

2. Purpose of scrutinising this issue

To assess the bullying situation for Oxfordshire's young people and the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes operated by the county.

3. Recommendation

Recommended for further review.

Possible options include an initial select committee or a working group to ultimately result in a review.

Section 2 : To be completed by the scrutiny team

CONTEXT

4. Which of our partners/stakeholders does this issue effect?

Children's Trust, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, TVP

5. Who has been consulted about the upstream importance of this scrutiny item?

Consultation with directorate to take place.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. Which corporate objective would this scrutiny item address?

Healthy and thriving communities

- Safeguarding – Ensuring that our child protection and safeguarding services are appropriately resourced, supported and effectively delivered and managed so that children and young people receive the care and protection they deserve.

7. Which Action Plan item from the Children and Young People's Plan would this address?

Stay Safe

- To improve support to schools and communities in promoting positive behaviour and emotional health and wellbeing, thereby reducing the incidence of behaviour difficulties, bullying and youth offending.
- To ensure that young people feel safe from bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school.
- To improve the local environment to make it feel safer for young people.

Target: To reduce the number of young people who say they have been bullied in the past year.

8. Which Local Area Agreement target would this item address and how are we currently performing against this target (if applicable)?

This issue does not relate directly to the measures identified for the LAA2. However it is part of the national indicator set and is one where OCC's performance has declined recently.

Concurrent Work

12. Is this issue identified in the relevant directorate's business plan?

Yes.

13. What work is concurrently being undertaken to address this issue?

There are anti-bullying programmes in operation throughout the county.

14. What value would the scrutiny committee add to this work?

This was identified as the number one concern of young people. According to the Children and Young People's Plan: They want adults to listen and take the problem seriously and be on top of covert bullying. They want safe "chill out" places to go in school. Above all, they want schools to involve young people in tackling bullying so that the problem is openly acknowledged and dealt with.

This is also an area that the council has historically done well with, but recent performance has been falling.

Resources

15. Which scrutiny committees does this issue relate to?

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

16. What resource commitment would be needed to effectively scrutinise the item?
A select committee or working group would need an assigned officer to help manage the project.

17. What impact would allocating resources to this item have on the overall scrutiny work programme?
If this item were prioritised, it would necessarily limit the resources available for other potential areas of scrutiny the committee could consider.

Recommendation

This item is recommended for a select committee or working group.

Decision of relevant Scrutiny Committee

Decision of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group