

## **Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024**

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Programme details the planned activity to be undertaken during the forthcoming municipal year.

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee has responsibility to review and scrutinise the county council's Children's Services functions, other matters affecting children, young people and families, and to satisfy the statutory responsibilities related to the education functions of a Children's Services Authority. Accordingly, the work of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee will focus on the following areas:

1. Children's Social Care
2. Children's Services
3. Education and Skills

The programme is determined by the Committee following a planning session at the start of the municipal year. This includes provision for the rights of county councillors to ask for any matter to be considered by the committee.

Coordination of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee programmes is undertaken by the Scrutiny Management Board. This is in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Terms of Reference, as set out in the county council's [Constitution](#) (Part 2 Article 5).

### **Cabinet Members**

The Cabinet Member portfolios aligned to the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee's responsibilities are:

[County Councillor Cosima Towneley](#), Cabinet Member for Children and Families

[County Councillor Jayne Rear](#), Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

The areas of responsibility for each Cabinet Member are set out at [Appendix A – Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members](#) to the county council's constitution.

## Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

	Committee Meeting Date					
Scrutiny Activity	20 Sept 2023	1 Nov 2023	13 Dec 2023	31 Jan 2024	13 Mar 2024	15 May 2024
<b>Service Area Report to Committee</b>	Academisation / Commercialisation  Education Strategy Annual Report  Report on School Place Planning Inquiry Day	EET/NEET (as well as connecting with local businesses to create opportunities)	Alternative Provision Strategy  SEND Sufficiency Plan	School Transport	Family Safeguarding and Complex Safeguarding (include update on Project Searchlight)	Strengthening the Youth Offer across Lancashire  Lancashire Education Strategy 2025-2028
<b>Annual Report to Committee</b>		School Place Planning Annual Update		Education Attainment Data		Youth Justice Board Annual Report  Annual Quality Assurance Checks
<b>Update Report for Information</b>		Education Attainment Overview Update			Education Strategy Update	
<b>Short Scrutiny (Rapporteur) Review or Other Scrutiny Review Such as a Deep Dive</b>			Briefing Note on the broader work and implications of the House Project.		A Deep Dive Session to be held on 23 April, at 2.00pm on Inclusion (including mainstream), Mental Health, Delivering the Where our Children Live programme, Family Hubs and what we are doing in Schools	

<b>Cabinet Member Required Attendance</b>	Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Cabinet Member for Children and Families
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### Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Recommendations Progress

Meeting Date	Report Title	Corporate Priority	Recommendation	Progress Detail
20 September 23	Academisation / Commercialisation	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	That: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Education Improvement Service and support the Academisation and Commercialisation report.</li> <li>ii. An update on Academisation and Commercialisation be provided to the committee in 12 months.</li> </ul>	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. The Cabinet Member provided a written response, which was emailed to committee members and will be included in the work programme report at the meeting on 31 January 2024.
20 September 23	Education Strategy Annual Report	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	That: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. An update on Home Education (to include the number of children who are home educated in Lancashire, and where possible, attainment data on what they go on to achieve e.g., at college) to be presented to the committee at the January 2024 meeting, or at an appropriate time.</li> <li>ii. A piece of work to be completed to understand the reasons behind persistent absence, using data from the termly visits conducted by Attendance Workers, to be circulated to the committee when available.</li> <li>iii. Details of the number of permanent exclusions, broken down by district, including details of any</li> </ul>	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. The Cabinet Member provided a written response, which was emailed to committee members and will be included in the work programme report at the meeting on 31 January 2024.

			<p>specific clusters and trends to be circulated to the committee.</p> <p>iv. Details of the percentage and raw numbers of families not receiving any of their top three choices in secondary school admissions, and a breakdown by district to be circulated to the committee.</p> <p>v. Details of the cost to schools for a Behaviour Consultant to be circulated to the committee.</p> <p>vi. A structure chart or diagram to illustrate the different services which are offered to schools, including their roles and responsibilities be circulated to the committee at an appropriate time.</p>	
20 September 23	Report on School Place Planning Inquiry Day (Mainstream and SEND) and School Transport	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services; Protecting our Environment	<p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A piece of work to take place on school place planning and how it has been distorted by various factors such as margin of error above 5% and new housing developments. Faith schools to also be included in this review.</li> <li>2. Consideration be given to what issues cause inaccurate forecasting when the margin of error is above 5%.</li> <li>3. Consideration be given to what measures can be taken to ameliorate the destabilisation of established schools when the margin of error is approaching 5%.</li> <li>4. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to consider the reinstatement of the Safer Travel Unit, as and when the budget allows.</li> <li>5. A report be presented to the Children, Families and Skills committee setting out how we work</li> </ol>	<p>The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.</p> <p>A response has been provided and was shared with the committee as part of the Work Programme report at its meeting on the 1 November 23.</p>

			<p>closer with the district planning authorities to ensure that we maximise developer contributions. Progress to be reported and updated on a regular basis on the Dashboard.</p> <p>6. Consideration be given to a review of the procurement process for school transport contracts in relation to environmentally friendly issues such as cleaner, low carbon and greener options and for this to be considered as part of the scoring process. Review to include types of fuel, vehicle age and plans for electric/hydrogen vehicles etc.</p> <p>7. That the Education Improvement Team liaise with schools and consider using the safest routes (not necessarily the shortest) to schools when assessing eligibility for home to school transport applications and proximity of schools to homes.</p> <p>8. That the School Transport Team and School Place Planning team have a closer working relationship with the aim of endeavouring to avoid an allocation of a place for which school transport is eligible but cannot be provided due to a lack of capacity.</p> <p>9. That a review of School Transport take place in conjunction with the Public Transport Team, to consider how best to increase uptake of greener school transport options and bus use more widely though better service provision. The aim of the review will be to provide sufficient places for all those who want to use the bus (notwithstanding the fundamental statutory obligation to provide for children who qualify for home to school transport). The review could explore:</p> <p>a. increased co-ordination of commercial, subsidised, school buses, and where</p>	
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			<p>appropriate, school-commissioned bus services;</p> <p>b. making better use of existing combined resources,</p> <p>c. more flexible fares for young people, and co-ordination with the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)</p> <p>10. That the Cabinet Members for Education and Skills and Highways and Transport attend a meeting of the Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies.</p>	
1 November 2023	Young People in Education, Employment or Training and Young People not in Education, Employment or Training	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Youth Futures Team be invited to attend a future meeting of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee to talk about their work, the progress they have made and any challenges and barriers they have faced.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions for officers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KS4 to KS5 Transition Booklet to be emailed out to committee members.</li> <li>- A request to the colleges for any data held on young people in EET, specifically relating to Refugees to be shared with the committee.</li> <li>- In regard to Tables 7 – 9 in the report showing the successful outcomes/progression routes achieved by the cohort of Lancashire's young people in care or leaving care who are engaged with the Employment and Support Team, if there a reason why it appears public sector opportunities in Lancashire are reducing?</li> </ul>	<p>The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member provided a written response, which was emailed to committee members and was included in the work programme report at the meeting on 31 January 2024.</p>

1 November 2023	School Place Planning Annual Report	Delivering better services; Caring for the vulnerable; Protecting our environment; Supporting economic growth	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A report to be presented to a future meeting of the committee to consider the new schools programme in Northwest Preston, taking into consideration the outcome of the consultation, feedback from existing schools and what that means in terms of the next stage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action for officers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regarding forecasting, it was highlighted during the Inquiry Day that some areas changed from a hot spot to a cold spot, with more than 20 places available in existing schools, it was agreed that a letter be written to established primary schools, in areas where they felt destabilised. Officers to check if a letter has gone out.</li> </ul>	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – awaiting response.
13 December 2023	Alternative Provision Strategy	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the action taken to date and planned in relation to the Alternative Provision Strategy be supported with no further recommendations from the committee at this time.</p>	No update required for this item.
13 December 2023	SEND Sufficiency Plan	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the proposals that are being developed to increase the range and availability of specialist provision across Lancashire be supported with no further recommendations from the committee at this time.</p>	No update required for this item.

31 January 2024	School and Post 16 Transport	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Consideration be given to investing in software that can provide tracking data on passenger routes, use of passes and how often routes are used to better manage, monitor, and rationalise the services provided in relation to school transport.</li> <li>ii. Further information to be provided on how risks are mitigated in relation to standees on buses.</li> </ul>	<p>The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member provided a written response, which was emailed to committee members and will be included in the work programme report at the meeting on 15 May 2024.</p>
31 January 2024	Education Attainment Data	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services; Supporting economic growth	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. When available, the 2024 Attainment Data Tables to be made available to members of the committee.</li> <li>ii. Outcomes of the Disadvantaged Conference with schools to be shared with the committee once available.</li> </ul>	<p>The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member provided a written response, which was emailed to committee members and will be included in the work programme report at the meeting on 15 May 2024.</p>
13 March 2024	Contextual Safeguarding Re-Model and Implementation of the EmPower Contextual Safeguarding Multi Disciplinary Team	Delivering better services; Caring for the vulnerable; Protecting our environment; Supporting economic growth	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A future agenda item on Youth Violence in Lancashire and what is being done to counteract it (to be considered in context with surrounding authorities), be included on the committee's work programme for 2024/25.</li> <li>ii. Regular updates to be provided to the committee on staff recruitment and retention and updates on how the multi-agency system is working, for example through case studies.</li> </ul>	<p>The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families – awaiting response.</p>



			iii. Contact details for local MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Teams to be shared with the committee.	
13 March 2024	Family Safeguarding Update	Delivering better services; Caring for the vulnerable; Protecting our environment; Supporting economic growth	<p><b>Resolved:</b> That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families:</p> <p>i. The committee support the service priorities identified for 2024/25 as detailed in the report / supporting presentation.</p> <p>ii. Information to be provided to the committee on the formula and method used to calculate staff turnover. Data on turnover rates for social workers in Lancashire to be provided and for this to be benchmarked against local authorities.</p> <p>iii. Data from exit interviews to be considered, if possible, to consider why staff leave the service.</p>	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families – awaiting response.
13 March 2024	Education Strategy Update	Delivering better services; Caring for the vulnerable; Protecting our environment; Supporting economic growth	<p>Members raised the following questions to be circulated to and answered by Aby Hardy, Head of Education Improvement, before the next meeting of the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding the number of early years children accessing funded 2-year-old places in the last 12 months, it was queried if there was any particular reason why the take up rate was lower in Preston.</li> <li>It was queried why the number of permanent exclusions in certain divisions had increased significantly from 2022-23 to 2023-24 in particular in Rossendale and whether this was linked to post Covid.</li> <li>Regarding attendance at schools and the pilot for families to shorten leave during school term, it was</li> </ul>	The questions raised by the committee have been shared with the Head of Improvement, a response was circulated to members via email and will be included in the Work Programme Report for the 15 May meeting.

			<p>questioned whether the new approach would be a blanket policy being rolled out or whether individual circumstances would be taken into consideration. The committee commented it was a significant difference to move from a fine to prosecution after 15 days.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the queries raised from the Education Strategy Update be shared with the Head of Education Improvement for a response to be provided to the committee.</p>	
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