| **Committee:** | Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel |
| **Date:** | 15th June 2011 |

Agenda item: **6**

Wards: All

Subject: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2011/12

Lead officer: Hilary Gullen, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Cllr Jeff Hanna, Chair of Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Forward Plan reference number: n/a

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Recommendations:

That Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

    i)   Consider their work programme for the 2011/12 municipal year, and agree issues and items for inclusion;

    ii)   Consider the methods by which the Panel would like to scrutinise the issues/items agreed;

    iii)   Identify a Member to lead for performance monitoring on behalf of the Panel;

    iv)   Identify a Member to lead for budget scrutiny on behalf of the Panel;

    v)   Consider whether they wish to make visits to local sites.

    vi)   Agree on an issue for scrutiny by a task group and appoint members to the Task Group. The Task Group will subsequently meet to scope the review and draft the terms of reference that will be reported back to the next Panel meeting for approval;

    vii)   Identify one issue for in-depth agenda item.

    viii)   Consider the appointment of co-opted members for the 2011/12 municipal year, to sit on the Panel and/or on the Task Group; and

    ix)   Inform the Scrutiny Officer of their views on their training and support needs.

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1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   The purpose of this report is to support and advise Members to determine their work programme for the 2011/12 municipal year.

1.2   This report sets out the following information to assist Members in this process:

    a) The principles of effective scrutiny and the criteria against which work programme items should be considered;

    b) The roles and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel;

c) The findings of the consultation programme undertaken with Members, Senior Management, voluntary and community sector organisations, partner organisations and Merton residents;

d) A summary of discussion by councillors and co-opted members at a topic selection workshop held on 17th May 2011; and

e) Support available to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to determine, develop and deliver its 2011/12 work programme.

2. Determining the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Annual Work Programme for 2011/12

2.1 Members are required to determine their work programme for the 2011/12 municipal year to give focus and structure to scrutiny activity to ensure that it effectively and efficiently supports and challenges the decision-making processes of the Council, and partner organisations, for the benefit of the people of Merton.

2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have specific roles relating to budget and business plan scrutiny and to performance monitoring that should automatically be built into their work programmes. Members are recommended to appoint a Performance Monitoring Lead Member and a Business Plan/Budget Scrutiny Lead Member on behalf of the Panel.

2.3 Overview and Scrutiny Panels may choose to scrutinise a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development, performance monitoring, information updates and follow up to previous scrutiny work. Any call-in work will be programmed into the provisional call-in dates identified in the corporate calendar as required.

2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel has six scheduled meetings over the course of 2011/12, including the scheduled budget meeting (representing a maximum of 18 hours of scrutiny per year – assuming 3 hours per meeting). Members will therefore need to be selective in their choice of items for the Panel's work programme.

Principles guiding the development of the scrutiny work programme

2.5 The following key principles of effective scrutiny should be considered when the Panel determines its work programme:

- **Be selective** – There is a need to prioritise so that high priority issues are scrutinised given the limited number of scheduled meetings and time available. Members should consider what can realistically and properly be reviewed at each meeting, taking into account the time needed to scrutinise each item and what the session is intended to achieve.

- **Add value with scrutiny** – Items should have the potential to 'add value' to the work of the Authority and its partners and contribute to the achievement of the strategic themes of Merton's Local Area Agreement and the Authority's Business Plan. If it is not clear what the intended outcomes or impact of a review will be then Members should consider if there are issues of a higher priority that could be scrutinised instead.

- **Be ambitious** – Panels should not shy away from carrying out scrutiny of issues that are of local concern, whether or not they are the primary responsibility of the council. The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities the power to do anything to promote economic, social and environmental well being of local communities. Subsequent Acts have conferred specific powers to scrutinise health services, crime and disorder issues and to hold partner organisations to account for any Local Area Agreement targets for which they have lead responsibility.

- **Be flexible** – Members are reminded that there needs to be a degree of flexibility in their work programme to respond to unforeseen issues/items for consideration/comment during the year and accommodate any developmental or additional work that falls within the remit of this Panel/Commission. For example Members may wish to questions officers regarding the declining performance of a service or may choose to respond to a Councillor Call for Action request.

- **Think about the timing** – Members should ensure that the scrutiny activity is timely and that, where appropriate, their findings and recommendations inform wider corporate developments or policy development cycles at a time when they can have most impact. Members should seek to avoid duplication of work carried out elsewhere.

Models for carrying out scrutiny work

2.6 There are a number of means by which the Overview and Scrutiny Panel can deliver its work programme. Members should consider which of the following options is most appropriate to undertake each of the items they have selected for inclusion in the work programme:

Item on a scheduled meeting agenda/ hold an extra meeting of the Panel	■ Panel can agree to add an item to the agenda for a meeting and call Cabinet Members/ Officers/Partners to the meeting to respond to questioning on the matter
	■ A variation of this model could be a one-day seminar-scrutiny of issues that, although important, do not merit setting up a 'task-and-finish' group.
Task Group	■ A small group of Members meet outside of the scheduled meetings to gather information on the subject area, visit other local authorities/sites, speak to service users, expert witnesses and/or Officers/Partners. The Task Group can then report back to the wider Panel with their findings to endorse the submission of their recommendations to Cabinet/Council
	■ This is the method usually used to carry out policy reviews
Panel asks for a report then takes a view on action	■ The Panel may need more information before taking a view on whether to carry out a full review so asks for a report – either from the service department or from the Scrutiny Team – to give them more details.
Meeting with service Officer/Partners	■ A Member (or small group of Members) has a meeting with service officers/Partners to discuss concerns or raise queries.
	■ If the Member is not satisfied with the outcome or believes that the Panel needs to have a more in-depth review of the matter s/he takes it back to the Panel for discussion

Individual Members doing some initial research	▪ A member with a specific concern carries out some research to gain more information on the matter and then brings his/her findings to the attention of the panel if s/he still has concerns.

2.7   Note that, in order to keep agendas to a manageable size, and to focus on items to which the Panel can make a direct contribution, the Panel may choose to take some "information only" items outside of Panel meetings, for example by email.

Support available for scrutiny activity

2.8   The Overview and Scrutiny function has dedicated scrutiny support from the Scrutiny Team to:

- Work with the Chair and Vice-Chair of each Panel to manage the work programme and coordinate the agenda, including advising officers and partner organisations on information required and guidance for witnesses submitting evidence to a scrutiny review;

- Provide support for scrutiny Members through briefing papers, background material, training and development seminars, etc;

- Facilitate and manage the work of the task and finish groups, including research, arranging site visits, inviting and briefing witnesses and drafting review reports on behalf on the Chair; and

- Promote the scrutiny function across the organisation and externally.

2.9   The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will need to assess how they can best utilise the available support from the Scrutiny Team to deliver their work programme for 2011/12.

2.10   The Panel is also invited to comment upon any briefing, training and support that is needed to enable Members to undertake their work programme. Members may also wish to undertake visits to local services in order to familiarise themselves with these. Such visits should be made with the knowledge of the Chair and will be organised by the Scrutiny Team.

2.11   The Scrutiny Team will take the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's views on board in developing the support that is provided.

3.   Selecting items for the Scrutiny Work Programme

3.1   Each Overview and Scrutiny Panel sets its own agenda within the scope of its terms of reference, with the Overview and Scrutiny Commission taking a coordinating role to ensure that any gaps or overlap in the scrutiny work programme are dealt with in a joined-up way.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel has the following remit: -

- Children's social care, including child protection
- Education, including school standards, special educational needs, the extended schools programme and the healthy schools initiative
- Youth services and youth engagement, including the Youth Parliament, young people 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET), and the Connexions Service
- Youth offending
- Children's Centres

- The Children's Trust

3.1 The Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for issues to scrutinise either as Panel agenda items or task group reviews. Suggestions have been received from members of the public, councillors and partner organisations including the police, NHS Sutton and Merton and Merton Voluntary Service Council. Other issues of public concern have been identified through the Annual Residents Survey. Issues that have been raised repeatedly at Community Forums have also been included. The Scrutiny Team has consulted departmental management teams in order to identify forthcoming issues on which the panel could contribute to the policymaking process.

3.2 A description of all the suggestions received is set out in Appendix 2.

3.3 These suggestions were discussed by the councillors who attended a "topic selection" workshop on 17th May 2011. This workshop was held in response to the finding of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's recent review of the scrutiny function which found a need to be more imaginative in the selection of topics and recommended the trialling a workshop approach this year.

3.4 The suggestions were prioritised at the workshop using the criteria listed in Appendix 3. In particular, participants sought to identify issues that related to the Council's strategic priorities or where there was underperformance; issues of public interest or concern and issues where scrutiny could make a difference.

3.5 A note of the workshop discussion relating to the remit of this Panel is set out in Appendix 4.

3.6 *Appendix 1 contains a draft work programme that has been drawn up, taking the workshop discussion into account, for the consideration of the Panel. The Panel is requested to discuss this draft and agree any changes that it wishes to make.*

3.7 The Panel may also wish to select items for scrutiny from the presentations made by Directors and Cabinet Members (at the Panel's meeting on 15th June) or based on other public priorities of which Members are aware through their ward work.

3.8 Items on the Cabinet's forward plan that relate to the remit of this Panel are listed in Appendix 5.   The Panel may wish to include one or more of these issues in its work programme.

4.   Task group reviews

4.1 The Panel is invited to select an issue for in-depth scrutiny and establish a task group in order to carry out the review.

4.2 One potential area for in-depth scrutiny was identified at the workshop:

Post 16 career pathways

Agreed that this should include consideration of those not in employment, education or training (NEETS) as well as the Connexions service.

Agreed that it is probably too soon to review how the new sixth forms are progressing – are they providing a comprehensive offer? What are their ambitions? How do they cater for less academic students?

15

5. Co-option to the Panel membership

5.1 Scrutiny Panels can consider whether to appoint non-statutory (non-voting) co-optees to the membership, in order to add to the specific knowledge, expertise and understanding of key issues to aid the scrutiny function. Panels may also wish to consider whether it may be helpful to co-opt people from "seldom heard" groups.

6. Public involvement

6.1 Scrutiny provides extensive opportunities for community involvement and democratic accountability. Engagement with service users and with the general public can help to improve the quality, legitimacy and long-term viability of recommendations made by the Panel.

6.2 Service users and the public bring different perspectives, experiences and solutions to scrutiny, particularly if "seldom heard" groups such as young people, disabled people, people from black and minority ethnic communities and people from lesbian gay bisexual and transgender communities are included.

6.3 This engagement will help the Panel to understand the service user's perspective on individual services and on co-ordination between services. Views can be heard directly through written or oral evidence or heard indirectly through making use of existing sources of information, for example from surveys. From time to time the Panel/Task Group may wish to carry out engagement activities of its own, by holding discussion groups or sending questionnaires on particular issues of interest.

6.4 Much can be learnt from best practice already developed in Merton and elsewhere. The Scrutiny Team will be able to help the Panel to identify the range of stakeholders from which it may wish to seek views and the best way to engage with particular groups within the community.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

7.1 A number of issues highlighted in this report recommend that Panel members take into account certain considerations when setting their work programme for 2011/12. Overview and Scrutiny Panels are free to determine their work programme as they see fit. Members may therefore choose to identify a work programme that does not take into account these considerations. This is not advised as ignoring the issues raised would either conflict with good practice and/or principles endorsed in the Review of Scrutiny, or could mean that adequate support would not be available to carry out the work identified for the work programme.

7.2 A range of suggestions from the public, partner organisations, officers and Members for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme are set out in the appendices, together with a suggested approach to determining which to include in the work programme. Members may choose to respond differently. However, in doing so, Members should be clear about expected outcomes, how realistic expectations are and the impact of their decision on their wider work programme and support time. Members are also free to incorporate into their work programme any other issues they think should be subject to scrutiny over the course of the year, with the same considerations in mind.

8. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

8.1 To assist Members to identify priorities for inclusion in the Panel's scrutiny work programme, the Scrutiny Team has undertaken a campaign to gather suggestions for possible scrutiny reviews from a number of sources:

a. Members of the public have been approached using the following tools: articles in the local press, My Merton and Merton Together, request for suggestions from all councillors and co-opted members, letter to partner organisations and to range of local voluntary and community organisations, including those involved in the Inter-Faith Forum and members of the Lesbian Gay and Transgender Forum;

b. Councillors have put forward suggestions by raising issues in scrutiny meetings, via the Overview and Scrutiny Member Survey 2011, and by contacting the Scrutiny Team direct; and

c. Officers have been consulted via discussion at departmental management team meetings.

9.   FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1   There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the financial, resource and property issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific financial, resource and property implications.

10.   LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

10.1   Overview and scrutiny bodies operate within the provisions set out in the Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

10.2   Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific legal and statutory implications.

11.   HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

11.1   It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engagement. The reviews will involve work to consult local residents, community and voluntary sector groups, businesses, hard to reach groups, partner organisations etc and the views gathered will be fed into the review.

11.2   Scrutiny work involves consideration of the human rights, equalities and community cohesion issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications.

12.   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

12.1   In line with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police and Justice Act 2006, all Council departments must have regard to the impact of services on crime, including anti-social behaviour and drugs. Scrutiny review reports will therefore highlight any implications arising from the reviews relating to crime and disorder as necessary.

13.   **RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1   There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the risk management and health and safety issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific risk management and health and safety implications.

14.   **APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

14.1   Appendix I – draft work programme 2011/12

14.2   Appendix 2 – Summary of topics relating to this Overview & Scrutiny Panel's remit suggested for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme

14.3   Appendix 3 – Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 17th May 2011

14.4   Appendix 4 – Notes from discussion of topics relating to the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Scrutiny Topic Selection Workshop 17th May 2011

14.5   Appendix 5 – Extract from Forward Plan

15.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15.1   None

One item may be selected for a full task group review. The topic (suggested at the topic selection evening on 17th May) was Post 16 Career Pathways. *The task group will examine the range of options available to young people in Merton to pursue post 16 education and training including i) the progress made at the new 6th form provision in secondary schools which opened in September 2010; ii) the vocational opportunities in the borough and links with local employers; iii) the advice given to young people on post 16 opportunities in the light of significant reduction in the Connexions service and iv) the implications for Merton arising from the raising of the participation age.*

Please note the last page provides information on items on the council's forward plan that relate to the portfolio of this Scrutiny Panel.

Meeting date – 15th June 2011

Item/Issue	Format
Overview and Key Challenges	
i Cabinet Member for Children's Services	Paper
ii Cabinet Member for Education	Paper
iii CSF Officer	Report
– *this item provides the opportunity the Cabinet Members each to outline the administration's priorities and key challenges in the year ahead and for officers in CSF department to inform panel about key service issues facing the department including changes in public policy and legislation; financial issues; the department's 'transformation' programme and the position relating to partnership arrangements with other providers of children's services in the borough*	
Performance Management – *this item will enable panel to examine the current effectiveness of the department and its partners in improving outcomes for children in Merton. The report will provide an overview of current performance of key services; the trajectory of improvement and information on external inspection of children's services. The item will also enable panel to review and refresh the 'index' of key performance indicators to be reported routinely to panel at its meetings during the year and to appoint a performance 'champion' for the panel.*	Report
Formally agree terms of reference of 2011/12 task group review *(see above)*	

Meeting date – 21st September 2011

Item/Issue	Format
Update on developments and follow up of previous business	Brief Report
Pre-decision scrutiny on new strategy for youth service (provisional) – *this item will enable panel to undertake pre decision scrutiny of plans being developed as part of the department's transformation agenda for the commissioning and delivery of youth services.*	Report
Pre-decision scrutiny on developing short breaks strategy (provisional) – *this item will enable panel to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of plans being developed as part of the department's transformation agenda for changing*	Brief Report

the role of Brightwell Respite Care unit and the current outreach team to provide a broader and more flexible range of respite/short breaks provision	
Vulnerable young people excluded from / not participating in school – *this item will report on findings and recommendations arising from the scrutiny task group established in 2010-11*	Task Group
Recruitment of foster carers – *an update will be provided on progress in recruiting a suitable range of fostercarers for children looked after by Merton in response to a question raised by panel at its meeting in March 2011*	Brief Report
Teenage pregnancy – *an update will be provided on current levels of teenage pregnancy, terminations and live births in Merton and on services provided to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and to support young parents*	Brief Report

Meeting date – 9th November 2011

Item/Issue	Format
Update on developments and follow up of previous business	Brief Report
Safeguarding – *this extended item will enable panel to undertake in depth scrutiny of the effectiveness of multi-agency partnership arrangements in Merton to safeguard and protect children from harm. Implications for social work and other disciplines arising from the recently published Munro Report will also be considered.*	Report
Budget progress – *CSF's first phase savings proposals for 2012-13 will be presented*	Report

Meeting date 18th January 2012 – scrutiny of the budget

Meeting date 18th February 2012

Item/Issue	Format
Update on developments and follow up of previous business	Brief Report
School Standards – *this extended item will enable panel to examine performance of Merton's schools in key stage results, attendance and exclusions for academic year 2010-11. Outcomes from Ofsted inspections of schools will also be reported and information provided on support given to schools in advance of inspections and in respect of post inspection action plans. Broader support for raising school standards including the provision of continuing professional development of teaching staff and school leaders will also be considered.*	Report

Meeting date 18th April 2012

Item/Issue	Format
Update on developments and follow up of previous business	Brief Report
Children's Trust and Children's Plan – *a report will be provided on progress made and the effectiveness of Merton's Children's Trust partnership arrangements in improving outcomes for children and young people. The item will include an overview of progress in implementing Merton's Children and Young People's Plan 2011-12 and specific consideration of partnership arrangements in respect of the provision of family support/preventive services.*	Report
Update on relevant changes to the NHS – *this item will update panel on changes in the commissioning and provision of health services. The report will focus on community health services for children including health visiting, school nursing and speech and language therapy*	Brief Report
Task Group Report (Topic to be determined)	Task Group

Informatives :

Members of the panel will be provided with appropriate informatives by email from time to time, and may request that such an informative is placed on a Panel Agenda for scrutiny if they so wish. Areas already identified for this purpose are :

    i.   Response to consultation on school funding reform

    ii.   Transformation Projects

    iii.   Green Paper on SEN

    iv.   Speech and Language therapy

    v.   Ofsted reports on the LA, when received

Description of topic suggestions received in relation to the remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Children's Trust and Children's Plan - suggestion from Panel

Merton's Children's Trust Board is also the Thematic Partnership for children and young people, within the Merton Partnership. Merton's Children's Trust arrangements began development in 2005 and bring together all partners involved in services to children and families in Merton. A wide range of groups and partnerships are accountable for their performance and activities to the Children's Trust Board.

Merton's Children's Trust arrangements began development in 2005 and bring together all partners involved in services to children and families in Merton. A wide range of groups and partnerships are accountable for their performance and activities to the Children's Trust Board. The Children's Trust is designed to deliver the outcomes of *Every Child Matters* through Merton's Children & Young People Plan (CYPP).

http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/merton_ct.htm

http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/plansandpolicies/cypplan.htm

The children's trust was an item on the January 2011 agenda so would be suitable for an update later in the year.

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed on the draft agenda as a report for

18th April.

Munro Report/Safeguarding - suggestion from Panel

The Munro Review of child protection is part of a national drive to improve the

quality of child protection services.

A summary of the report is as follows:

- To encourage change the review has been working in partnerships with five authorities who have requested greater flexibility when assessing the needs of children and young people. They'll be granted temporary suspension from statutory guidance for six months.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children to be reduced down to pure statutory guidance (eliminating professional advice)

- The review is minded to strengthen the role of local safeguarding children boards in monitoring the impact of practice, training and learning on the child's journey

- It's important the role of the Director of Children's Services continues as the key point of professional accountability for child protection services

- Review endorses sure start children's centres and the health visitor service in early intervention

- Evidence to the review shows strong support for the common assessment framework.

- Neglect not always being safely identified and responded to. The review is considering solutions where multi-agency teams that include social workers are located in the community alongside universal services.

- Considering getting rid of initial and core assessments and any referral to children's social care would be used to build on.

- The current management style puts too much emphasis on the bureaucratic aspects of the work. Radical reform is needed to give due weight to the importance of the cognitive and emotional requirements of the work.

- The review is considering how "user-centred design" of assessment and decision making tools can provide better aids to professional reasoning.

- The review is working in particularly with practitioners on how the design of the integrated children's system (ICS) software can be made more user friendly and efficient.

- Social work practice needs to be more evidence based.

- The review is building on the Social Work Reform Board's capabilities framework to draft the specialist capabilities needed in child and family social work.

- Review looking at, with the College of Social Work, improving the response of the social work profession to public debates about their work, especially in a crisis, so that there is a clearer account of professional practice.

- The review is considering whether, in light of wider reform of public services, there is a need for a panel composed of the relevant professions within the child protection system to advice government and the professions on how the different parts of the child protection system are interacting and whether problems are emerging.

At the Panel meeting on 22nd March, Merton's policy of early intervention and support, so as to decrease the likelihood of a crisis approach and greater intervention being needed subsequently was highlighted. Also explained was the rising demand for services at the front line whilst the number of subsequent assessments remain relatively stable, and how the number of children being placed in the care system in Merton (per 1000 population) is well below the national, and particularly, London average.

Suggestion: suitable for a substantive information item to bring members up to date with legislation.

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed on the draft agenda as a report for

9th November

School Inspection Framework - Suggestion from Panel

What are the key features of this framework and the school inspection arrangements from September 2009?

From the Ofsted website - Under the revised school inspection arrangements from September 2009 inspectors give particular priority to:

- promoting improvement: inspectors make specific recommendations based on their diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses

- evaluating the achievement and wider well-being of pupils as a whole and of different groups of pupils, and assessing the extent to which schools ensure that all pupils, including those most at risk, succeed

- evaluating learning and teaching: inspectors spend a high proportion of their on-site inspection time in the classroom

- assessing how well schools promote equality of opportunity, and how effectively they tackle discrimination

- checking schools' procedures for safeguarding - keeping children and young people from harm

- fostering the engagement of headteachers, schools' staff and governors in the process of inspection so that they understand the judgements made

- gathering, analysing and taking into account the views of parents and pupils

- assessing how effectively schools work in partnership with other providers in order to promote better outcomes for pupils.

The revised inspection arrangements also extend the principle of proportionality, in that the frequency of inspection is proportionate to need.

Suggestion: possible single item agenda with information on the framework and input from teaching staff and governors. Examine the impact on Merton schools.

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed on the draft agendas a report for

18th February, to include advice to schools/action planning/etc.

Teenage Pregnancy Services - Suggestion from Panel

From our website: Teenage Parent Adviser: Aims of the Team:
> In 1999 a major government report on teenage pregnancy showed that Britain had the highest teenage birth rate in Western Europe. London Borough of Merton and the Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust have developed a ten year teenage pregnancy strategy to reduce the conception rates in under eighteens and provide better support for teenage parents.

- Better SRE: Training for agencies in the delivery of SRE.

- Interactive drama project aimed at exploring communication, assertiveness and negotiation skills.

- Development of a network of practitioners available to support the delivery of SRE in schools and non-school settings.

- Encourage parents and carers to talk to their children about sex and relationships.

- Better contraception advice and information services:

- Support the development of young people's family planning services.

- Extend the provision of emergency contraception and condoms in a range of settings.

- Develop drop in services at a variety of venues.

- Increase awareness of the services available to young people via the Getting it On website.

- Better support for teenage parents:

- Continue to ensure that all teenage parents are linked into services that meet their needs.

- Explore how best to support and promote the welfare of young fathers as well as young mothers.

- To increase on to one and group support for young parents.

http://www.merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children-family-health-social-care/childrensservices/teenagepregnancy.htm

Suggestion: agenda item to give up to date figures for Merton and current projects.

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed on the draft agenda as a brief report for

21st September.

Sixth Form Lines to Apprenticeships/business/vocational courses/college links - suggestion from Panel

In the Panel meeting on 22nd March, officers outlined ongoing discussions about career pathways (and different routes to degrees) with South Thames College (Merton Campus) which had good links with a number of local employers, the need for schools to work with the College in this regard, and outlined other steps being taken to develop the apprenticeship route and links with local employers.

Our website details courses offered at school, in partnership with Merton College and delivered at Merton College's Wandsworth campus. The courses include construction, hairdressing, accounts and customer service.

http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/6thform/courses/apprenticeshipsandworkbasedlearning.htm

The DirectGov website has lists of options post 16 including skills for work and apprenticeships

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/OptionsAt16/index.htm

The London Learning Consortium has information for pre-apprenticeships, training and work experience information:

London Learning Consortium: http://www.londonlc.org.uk/services/

Possible task group review to 'set the scene' for discussions that have only recently started and to raise awareness and enthusiasm of options available post 16.

(Subsequent to meeting) This issue would be suitable for a task group review, looking into sixth forms/apprenticeships/links to further and higher education/careers guidance.

Partnership Working - family support and child protection - suggestion from Panel

From our website:

The concept of the multi-agency team has been developed in response to the need for services to provide a more joined-up approach both to benefit children and their families and to maximise the use of existing resources. As with all integrated working processes, it aims to reduce duplication and support co-ordinated service delivery.

Support for Integrated Working

There is a range of support in place to develop and improve practice in integrated working. The role of integrated working teams includes: offering individual support and advice to practitioners and managers

Co-ordinating the implementation of integrated working across the borough

Developing and providing a range of training activities to support implementation

Communicating developments in integrated working and disseminating good practice

Monitoring the implementation of integrated working across all services.

http://www.merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children-family-health-social-care/isa/mwbm/mwbm-integrated-services.htm

Suggestion: Agenda item to bring panel members up to date with current practice and issues.

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed on the draft agenda as a report on

18th April.

Speech and Language Therapy for Children - suggestion from Panel

From PCT website:

In general there is an 'open' referral system for the Speech and Language therapy service, so a medical referral is not always necessary. However, there are occasionally some exceptions to this.

 Children

We accept referrals for assessment, for children aged 18 months to 5 years. Some children who have special needs, may be known to us at an earlier age and some older children may access our service because they have a Statement of Special Educational Need, that highlights a specific speech and language difficulty. Children (and adults) with a stammer will also be seen beyond the age of 5.

 http://www.suttonandmerton.nhs.uk/ec/localservices/update/readnew.asp?id=24

Suggestion: Agenda item for information, bringing in NHS professionals and service users

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed as an informative item on the draft work programme.

Health Visitor Services - suggestion from Panel

From PCT website:

The aim of the health visiting service is to improve the health of the whole community and to help in promoting healthy lifestyles addressing concerns about physical and mental wellbeing.

 Health Visitors are qualified nurses with further specialist training and are experienced in child health, health promotion and health education.

 Health Visitors work closely with GPs, Practice Nurses, District Nurses, School Health Nurses, Midwives, Social Workers and School Teachers.

Every family with children under five years has a health visitor who can advise on all aspect of children's growth, health and development as well as offering advice on many other issues such as immunisation, diet, nutrition, sleep and behaviour.

Health Visitors are not just there to support the baby but the whole family, they can also offer advice about men and women's health issues, emotional well being and local support networks and services.

http://www.suttonandmerton.nhs.uk/ec/localservices/update/readnew.asp?id=18

Suggestion: Information item for panel members – particularly useful to gain more information from external professionals.

Agreed that this area is not a priority for the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Managing Dyslexia - suggestion from resident

From our website:

Merton Support for Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy

Difficulties

Merton Inclusion and SEN Strategy 2008 – 2010 phase 1 and 2 included the

development of a dyslexia workstream. The actions have included :

New draft Guidance developed with LA services, schools, parents and pupils and with regard to the Rose Report June 2009. This guidance is now being taken to the Headteachers' forums although many of the practical elements are already known to and used in our schools. The guidance includes suggestions and examples of :

- approaches to assessment and tools
- inclusive dyslexia checklists /layouts
- appropriate interventions
- levels of training and accessing training

Merton Headteachers and SENCOs have been introduced to the Inclusion

Development Programme for foundation knowledge learning in dyslexia available to all schools, their teachers and teaching assistants.

The Language and Learning Support Team and the Educational Psychology Service are available to all Merton Schools for support and training. The training can be directed at whole school staff, groups or individual staff members. Support is available through assessment, teaching, modelling and advice.

More recently the Headteachers and SENCOs were informed that there is national funding available for teachers to train as dyslexia specialists and were directed to the new Dyslexia Trust to access this training. The Headteachers were urged to consider the availability of appropriate levels of specialism across their clusters.

In Merton there are five clusters of schools.

The SEN audit December 2009 included gathering data on the SEN qualifications held by Merton school staff. This will be fed back to schools with suggestions for further training.

This year Merton SEN and Inclusion Service and Merton School Standards and

Quality have directed funds to increasing school capacity to support pupils with

dyslexia. Each school has been bought Communicate in Print 2, a software package which, enables pupils with literacy difficulties to access the written word through symbol support. The Learning and Language Support Team has run free training sessions for school staff. This is now being used across the Primary, Secondary and special schools to create resources. The service has also funded outside trainers to deliver training to 45 Merton school staff, on the literacy intervention, Fresh Start which has been particularly successful with those identified as dyslexic. The training will enable this resource to be used to support pupils with literacy difficulties, in KS2 and KS3.

Suggestion: information item on agenda to see what the next steps are.

Managing Dyslexia

Agreed that this area is not a priority for the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Suggestions from Paul Ballatt

Transformation projects

1   Youth Justice review in CSF in the summer (LEAN)

2   LEAN supporting a review of carefirst that is ongoing in Children's Social Care.

Reviews of Access and Assessment and Looked after Children in progress

Suggestion: feedback to panel after the above reviews.

(Subsequent to meeting) This item, Transformation Projects, has been placed as an informative item on the draft work programme.

Pre-decision scrutiny on new strategy for youth service

The Youth Service in Merton offers a range of activities and projects for young people in the borough including the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, the Detached Youth Work Team, Youth Participation (Youth Parliament), four youth centres and an information service.

Stockton on Tees ran a task group review on youth service strategy with the following aims:

To identify options for future strategy / policy / service provision that will deliver
efficiency savings and sustain / improve high quality outcomes for residents.
Specifically:
Proposals on levels of service to be provided taking into account the views
of young people
Identification of gaps in service and recommendations for addressing these
Identification of resources to deliver myplace

http://www.cfps.org.uk/scrutiny-exchange/library/education-and-young-people/?id=3135

Agenda item and possible task group review in due course – opportunity for members to engage with young people.

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed as a report item (provisional) for

21st September.

Pre-decision scrutiny on developing short breaks strategy - Brightwell replacement

From our website:

Merton's residential care home, Brightwell Respite Care House, offers quality overnight care for children with disabilities and day care during the summer holidays. To access funded respite care from London Borough of Merton, you will require an assessment of need and meet certain eligibility criteria. The Children with Disabilities team can advise you. All initial referrals for respite care should be made through the child or young person's social worker. If you don't

28

have access to a social worker, a referral can be made by contacting the Access and Assessment Team at Worsfold House. Referral Required

(Subsequent to meeting) This item has been placed as a report item (provisional) for 21st September.

Funding of schools - changes (for information)

Fair funding for all schools from
http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/pressnotices/a0076656/fair-funding-for-all-schools
dated 13th April 2011

Headteachers today welcomed a Government consultation on how school funding can be made fairer.

It seeks the views of parents, teachers, schools, unions and local authorities about the current system, and asks whether a new system would result in a fairer outcome for schools.

The consultation launched today is the first part of a two-stage process. Taking into account these views, further proposals will be published for consultation later this year.

As it stands, the school funding system creates large variations in how much money similar schools in different parts of the country receive. Funding is based on historic calculations - some dating back to at least 2005 - that bear little resemblance to the needs of schools and their pupils today.

For example:

- Similar primary schools' funding can vary by as much as £1,300 per pupil. Similar secondary schools' funding can vary by as much as £1,800 per pupil. In a secondary school of 1,000 pupils, that is a difference of around £1.8 million. This could pay for around 40 extra teachers.

- In one local authority, a school with 43 per cent of its pupils eligible for free school meals received £3,367 per pupil. In another local authority, a school with only 10 per cent of its pupils eligible for free school meals received £4,032 per pupil. This is a difference of £655 per pupil.

- The system cannot respond to changes in the types of children living in certain areas. In Peterborough, for example, the number of children who speak English as an additional language has risen by 60 per cent since 2005. This significant change will not have been reflected properly in the funding system.

Ministers believe this is unfair, which is why the Government is consulting on whether we should try to make school funding fairer.

Ideally a new funding system for all schools would:

- distribute money in a fair and logical way, with schools in similar circumstances and with similar intakes of pupils receiving similar levels of funding

- provide transparent, additional funding to support deprived pupils, with the Pupil Premium being the first step to creating a fairer funding system

- be clear and easy for parents, schools and the public to understand

- support a diverse range of school provision, including Academies and Free Schools.

More than £35 billion of revenue is spent on schools each year. It is crucial that the funding system provides good value for money and that resources are distributed fairly.

The consultation asks questions including:

- Do you agree with the case for reforming the system?

- Do you agree with the aim of ensuring that all deprived pupils get the same level of funding no matter where they live?

- What is the right balance between simplicity and complexity?

The Government is also consulting on potential options for funding Academies next year, as an immediate step towards making the funding system simpler. This consultation will run for six weeks.

> At present, Academy funding replicates the funding that other schools in the local authority receive. But this system was designed for a much smaller number of Academies. As more schools choose to convert, the current system is becoming increasingly clumsy and needs to change. 629 Academies are now open, compared to 203 in May 2010.

There is currently a consultation on school funding reform: rationale and principles from the DoE, deadline 25th May 2011. This consultation is seeking rationale and principles for reforming school funding. It aims to create a new funding system which is fair, transparent and able to support a diverse range of school provision.

Green Paper on SEN - white paper and law this year - take to Panel early in the year

Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability proposes:

- a new approach to identifying SEN through a single Early Years setting-based category and school-based category of SEN;

- a new single assessment process and Education, Health and Care Plan by 2014;

- local authorities and other services will set out a local offer of all services available;

- the option of a personal budget by 2014 for all families with children with a statement of SEN or a new Education, Health and Care Plan;

- give parents a real choice of school, either a mainstream or special school; and

- introduce greater independence to the assessment of children's needs.

A consultation is currently running to 30th June 2011 on Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability. This consultation seeks views on the green paper, which contains wide ranging proposals to improve outcomes for children and young people who are disabled or have special educational needs. The reform aism to minimise the adversarial nature of the system for families and maximise value for money.

Recommended that updates should be shared by email.

Possible Task Group review on SEN transport

This was reviewed in 2002

- Recommendations included making drivers more contactable, the complaints procedure made easier to understand, a critical redrafting of the policy document on SEN Transport, that a booklet be produced to give information to parents of SEN pupils, and that a satisfaction survey be undertaken.

http://www.cfps.org.uk/scrutiny-exchange/library/transport/?id=202

Noted that a work group, including Cllr Nick Draper, has been established to look at this area. There will be consultation in due course on proposals emerging from this work group. Cllr Jeff Hanna, as Panel Chair, will talk to Cllr Draper to get more detail.

Early years - how are we doing for 2 - 3 year olds, universal and targeted work.

From the executive summary of Celebrating Success: Standards and Achievements in Merton Schools 2010-2011:

Performance at Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is above the national average for all key measures. Children achieving both 6 or more in all Personal Social Emotional Development scales, 6 or more in all Communication Language & Literacy scales, and a total 78 points or more increased 5% from 2008/2009 and is 6% above the national average.

Merton's percentage gap between the mean of the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFSP, reduced by 5.4% since 2008/2009 and is 4.3% less than the national average. Merton's performance for closing the gap is 12th best in the country and the best in London.

Noted that performance is good and agreed that this area is not a priority for the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Service plans and Performance Indicators - look at improving the way information presented

From the CYP Panel meeting on 22nd March 2011:

At the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel meeting on 5th June 2007 it

was agreed that the Children, Schools and Families Department would submit a regular performance report on a range of key performance indicators. This would act as a 'health check' for the panel and would be over and above more detailed performance reports relating to specific areas of the Department's activities - eg annual school standards report; safeguarding performance reports - which the Panel would continue to receive.

Current indicators:

Childrens' Social Care

Rate per 10,000 Child Protection Plans

% of initial assessments completed within 10 days

% of core assessments completed within 35 days

% of Children with a Child Protection Plan with allocated a social worker

% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans

% of Children with Child Protection Plans visits due completed on time (Child Seen)

Child Protection Re-registration

Rate per 10,000 Children in Care

% of Children in Care with allocated social worker

% of reviews held for Children in Care

Number of Children in Care using in-house foster care

% Children in Care adopted during the year

Youth Inclusion

Young people re-offending

The proportion of Youth Offenders who are in education, training or employment

First Time Entrants to the youth Justice system (aged 10-17)

Youth Service: Participation

Education

Number of Pupil Exclusions Permanent

Number of BME Pupil Exclusions Permanent

Outcome of School Inspections % excellent/good

Number of families living in 30% most deprived communities taking

up universal services in childrens' centres

Statements issued within 26 weeks without exceptions

Statements issued within 26 weeks with exceptions

Safety

CYP Road accidents - reported incidents Fatal/Serious/Slight

Other suggestions:

School Standards - supporting weaker subjects and developing teaching in weaker areas - suggestion from Panel

This would require identification of the weaker subjects, which will vary from school to school.

Changes in the Health Sector and new providers in April - suggestion from Panel

Third Sector involvement as we are disinvesting (lack of goodwill if commissioned services taken away) - suggestion from Panel

Selecting a Scrutiny Topic – criteria used at the workshop on 17th May 2011

The purpose of the workshop is to identify priority issues for consideration as agenda items or in-depth reviews by the Scrutiny Panels and the Commission. The final decision on this will then be made by the Panels/Commission at their first meetings.

All the issues that have been suggested to date by councillors, officers, partner organisations and residents are outlined in the supporting papers.

Further suggestions may emerge from discussion at the workshop.

Points to consider when selecting a topic:

o Is the issue strategic, significant and specific?

o Is it an area of underperformace?

o Will the scrutiny activity add value to the Council's and/or its partners' overall performance?

o Is it likely to lead to effective, tangible outcomes?

o Is it an issue of community concern and will it engage the public?

o Does this issue have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the population?

o Will this work duplicate other work already underway, planned or done recently?

o Is it an issue of concern to partners and stakeholders?

o Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?

Notes from discussion of topics relating to the remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel,
Scrutiny Topic Selection Workshop 17th May 2011

Attendees:

Councillors Jeff Hanna, Laxmi Attawar , Agatha Akyigyina , Maxi Martin, Iain Dysart, Karin Forbes and James Holmes

Paul Ballatt, insert job title

Penny Taylor, insert job title

Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services (facilitator & note taker)

Performance Management

Asked for a full report to be presented to the Panel's first meeting so that areas of underperformance can be identified and the Panel can decide an appropriate scrutiny approach.

Children's Trust and Children's Plan

Recommended that the Panel receive an update at a meeting later in the year.

Safeguarding

Recommended that any report received should provide an update on the legislation and the Council's plans to respond to new legislative requirements.

Possible item for a themed meeting.

Note - make sure this doesn't duplicate material covered by planned Member briefing on corporate parenting –planned by Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

School Inspection Framework

Recommended that this be incorporated into the Standards meeting – include information on how schools prepare for inspection, support from the LEA and how action plans are progressed.

Teenage Pregnancy Services - Suggestion from Panel

Noted that local teenage pregnancy figures are low.

Recommended that this be low priority for the time being – Panel may wish to reconsider once legislation changes arrangements for service provision.

Post 16 career pathways

Agreed that this should include consideration of those not in employment, education or training (NEETS) as well as the Connexions service.

Agreed that it is probably too soon to review how the new sixth forms are progressing – are they providing a comprehensive offer? What are their ambitions? Howdo they cater for less academic students?

Possible agenda item or task group review involving discussion with sixth form students.

Partnership Working - family support and child protection

Members wondered if this could also be incorporated into the Standards meeting.

Recommended that the Panel receive a report to provide information on how intervention and prevention services are being re-commissioned so that it can scrutinise the level of investment in these services and the impact of proposed savings.

Speech and Language Therapy for Children

Recommended that the Panel receive an initial report providing an overview of service provision and pertinent issues so that it can decide whether to look at the issue in more depth.

This could be an agenda item or be dealt with "offline" by email.

Health Visitor Services

Agreed that this area is not a priority for the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Managing Dyslexia

Agreed that this area is not a priority for the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Transformation projects

Recommended that Panel Members should be provided with reports by email to update on progress with individual transformation projects that fall within the Panel's remit. Any concerns can be raised at a subsequent Panel meeting.

Pre-decision scrutiny on new strategy for youth service

Recommended that this should be included in the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Pre-decision scrutiny on developing short breaks strategy
Recommended that this should be included in the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Funding of schools - changes (for information)

Paul Ballatt agreed to check the process for responding to the current consultation on school funding reform (deadline 25th May 2011) and share the Council's submission with Panel members.

Green Paper on SEN

Recommended that updates should be shared by email.

Possible Task Group review on SEN transport

Noted that a work group, including Cllr Nick Draper, has been established to look at this area. There will be consultation in due course on proposals emerging from this work group. Cllr Jeff Hanna, as Panel Chair, will talk to Cllr Draper to get more detail.

Early years

Noted that performance is good and agreed that this area is not a priority for the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Update on relevant changes to the NHS

Agreed that it might be useful to have a report on this later in the year. Could be an agenda item, email or separate briefing for Members (perhaps joint with the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel)

Gang culture

Item was suggested during the Commission's topic workshop discussion

Noted that this has been scrutinised in the past and agreed that this area is not a priority for the Panel's 2011/12 work programme.

Forward Plan items relating to the remit of the Children and Young People Panel:

Rutlish School and John Innes Recreation Ground - footpath closure:

Consideration of the closure, during school hours, of a public footpath running through Rutlish School, from John Innes Recreation Ground toward Mostyn Road, following public consultation.

20th June 2011

Cricket Green 6th Form - Following the statutory proposal to agree a 6th form for the school

15 June 2011