

**Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: 11 January 2017**

Wards: All

Subject: Rapporteur scrutiny review of user voice – scope and terms of reference

Lead officer: Annette Wiles, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Councillor Jerome Neil

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**Recommendations:**

- A. That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel agree to a rapporteur scrutiny review of how the voice of children and young people informs policy and frontline practice;
  - B. That the Panel discuss and approve the terms of reference and scope of the rapporteur scrutiny review of user voice as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.6 below; and
  - C. That the Panel appoint Councillor Jerome Neil to conduct this rapporteur scrutiny review on its behalf.
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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To present the draft terms of reference and scope of the rapporteur scrutiny review of user voice to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for approval.

**2. DETAILS**

- 2.1 The Panel recognises that children and young people are at the heart of the services it scrutinises. In order to carry out effective scrutiny, it is recommended that the Panel undertake a rapporteur scrutiny review that will help members understand how children and young people influence policy and frontline practice.
- 2.2 In order that this review is effective, it is recommended that this focus on the voice of looked after children and young people.
- 2.3 Draft terms of reference have been set out below for the consideration by the Panel:
  - To understand how looked after children are supported to express their wishes and feelings;
  - To understand what systems are in place to ensure looked after children are able to participate in decisions about their lives;
  - To understand how looked after children have a voice in the review and development of the arrangements that affect their lives; and
  - To understand how the Panel might routinely hear the views of looked after children to support it in conducting effective scrutiny.

- 2.4 It is anticipated that rapporteur scrutiny review would examine how the voice of looked after children in Merton is heard, analysed and used to inform service policy, frontline practice and arrangements for individual children. The scrutiny rapporteur would question officers, the responsible cabinet member, external experts (such as Keith Makin, the independent chair of the Merton Safeguarding Children Board) and potentially representatives of the looked after community. Much of the work would therefore be done through site visits.
- 2.5 The task group would produce a report for the Panel's meeting in March 2017 so that its findings could inform the Panel's work programme for 2017/18.
- 2.6 Support would be provided by the Scrutiny Officer.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

### **4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

There has been preliminary consultation with officers from the Children, Schools and Families Department. A key element of this work will be to understand how children and young people themselves are consulted.

### **5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None for the purposes of this covering report. Any resource implications will need to be taken into account when drawing up and approving specific review recommendations

### **6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are none specific to this report.

### **7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are none specific to this report.

### **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are none specific to this report.

### **9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are none specific to this report.

### **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 None

### **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None