

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	6 th March 2025
REPORT OF	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
SUBJECT	Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel - Work Programme
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The scrutiny panels act as a reviewing mechanism for decisions made relating to the strategic policy, performance and resources required to deliver the ambitions of the Council and its key partnerships. The aim of the scrutiny process is to make sure decision making is robust by providing constructive challenge. This contributes to the Council being effective and efficient, and therefore it is integral to the delivery of the Council Priorities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reflects on the 2024/25 municipal year and the work undertaken by the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel. The panel will also consider, within its terms of reference, suggestions to be included in the 2024/25 work programme ahead of confirmation of the work programme at the first meeting of this panel in the new Municipal Year.

MATTER(S) FOR CONSIDERATION

The panel is invited to reflect on the 2024/25 work programme, noting any matters it would like to highlight within the Annual Scrutiny Report, and consider any suggested items for inclusion in next year's work programme.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 This report and its appendix summarises the 2024/25 agreed work programme and the panel's timetable of activities to undertake this work.
- 1.2 During the course of the year, the panel has considered the following issues:
 - The panel have received updates on the standing items Children Services Improvement Journey and Maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provisions. Members have felt that these areas have come a long way in terms of the service Children's Services now offers and the relationships Officers have built with the Nurseries and Daycare providers.
 - Cabinet reports have been considered on Local Offer to Care Experienced People, Care experience as a locally protected characteristic, NEL Children's Residential Transformation and to recommission Dedicated Outreach Support Service and Outreach Provision for Children with Autism or Communication and Interaction Needs, undertake procurement exercise and enter contracts. These were all welcomed by panel members and each report received the support of the panel.
 - The panel requested a special meeting to focus on Elective Home Education. After a detailed discussion, the panel made a recommendation to the

Portfolio Holder for Children and Education to write a letter to Secretary of State to ask them to compensate local authorities for children who are not full-time pupils at any school and provide more resources to enable local authorities to support the families of home educated children and Ask for the proposed local authority powers of consent to electively home educate, be extended to children who are Child In Need, and to stipulate a responsibility on statutory and non-statutory partner agencies to report cases of electively home educated children to the local authority for the purposes of the central register of children not in receipt of education.

A range of other areas have been received in the Municipal year 2024/25, these can be seen in the appendix to this report.

- 1.3 The Annual Scrutiny Report is due to be submitted to the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2024 and will include a full summary of the work undertaken by this panel during the current year. If panel members wish to highlight particular work within this report then they are invited to do so.
- 1.4 The panel will also have an early opportunity to consider any topics it may wish to retain in or add to next year's work programme.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Any actions which the council may undertake as a result of recommendations made by scrutiny will be the subject of further reports, which will include risk assessment(s) by the author(s) concerned.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The work programme demonstrates the breadth of matters considered by scrutiny.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial considerations included within this report.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no impacts on climate change and the environment as a direct result of this report. Any actions which the council may undertake as a result of recommendations made by scrutiny will be the subject of further reports, which will include climate change, nature recovery and environmental implications by the author(s) concerned.

6. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer or the Assistant Director People and Organisational Development.

7. WARD IMPLICATIONS

May impact on all wards

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Annual report of scrutiny 2023/24
Panel tracking reports

9. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Beverly O'Brien – Scrutiny and Committee Advisor

JO ROBINSON

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – POLICY, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES
(STATUTORY SCRUTINY OFFICER)**

SUMMARY WORK PROGRAMME: Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel 2024/25

Thursday 11 th July 4:30pm	Thursday 15 th August 4.30 pm Special Joint with Economy, Culture and Tourism	Thursday 1 st October 4:30pm	Thursday 14 th November 4:30pm	Thursday 16 th January 2025 4.30pm	Wednesday 5 th February 2025 5.00pm	Thursday 6 th March 2025 4:30pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023/24 Quarter 4 Council Plan Performance Report 2023/24 Provisional Financial Outturn Report Work Programme 2024/25 Improvement Update Maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provisions Our offer to Foster Carer's Recommissioning Speech and Language provision Partners contribution to the Children's agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills Action Plan – Progress Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter 1 Finance Monitoring 2024/25 and Council Plan Performance Report Improvement Update Maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provisions (verbal) scope for special Oct. Local offer to care leavers and youth voice and influence update. Progress of the SEND specialist free school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring 2024/25 and Council Plan Performance Report Improvement Update Maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provisions Work Programme (6 monthly review) School Attendance Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report – 2023/24 Children Homes Transformation Council Plan Consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement Update Maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provisions Integrated Front Door Family Hubs School Transport/Transport costs Recommissioning of North East Lincolnshire Council dedicated Outreach Support Service and Outreach Provision for Children with Autism or Communication and Interaction Needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elective Home Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter 3 Finance Monitoring 2024/25 and Council Plan Performance Report Scrutiny Panel Work Programme – Review 2024/25 and Work Programme 2025/26 Maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provisions Alternative Provision School Attainment Improvement Journey

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS: Tracking – Forward Plan – Public Questions – Questions to Portfolio Holder – Children Services Improvement Journey – Maintained Nurseries and Daycare Provisions

ITEMS CARRIED OVER FROM PREVIOUS WORK PROGRAMME:

BRIEFING PAPERS:

- Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2023/24

FURTHER TOPICS IDENTIFIED AT THE LAST PANEL MEETING (TO BE SCHEDULED IN):

- Early Years activity/ Wraparound Childcare
- Finance Report that details how high-cost areas of Children Services has changed overtime

WORKSHOPS:

- Budget Workshops – Jan 2025

FURTHER TOPICS IDENTIFIED for 2025/26

- Progress of the SEND specialist free school.
- School Transport inc. costs
- Family Hubs – focus on demographical data that shows were service users for Family Hubs were coming from