

Role of Scrutiny at the County Council

**Children and Young People SC
14 June 2017**



Background to Scrutiny

- Formal scrutiny introduced as part of the move to Executive Arrangements following the Local Government Act 2000
- Authorities operating Executive Arrangements must have at least one Scrutiny Committee



Role and purpose of Scrutiny

- To hold the Executive and the Council to account
- To make recommendations to the Executive or to the County Council arising from the scrutiny process
- To conduct research and analysis of policy issues and possible options
- To assist the Executive and the County Council in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework



Terms of Reference – CYP SC

“Reviewing how **the needs and interests of children and young people are met by all Departments, policies, services and decisions**; and how performance is evaluated and improved. Universal, targeted and specialist services for children and young people: prevention and management of risk; social care; children’s and young people’s wellbeing; education – supporting and enabling learning for all children and young people; internal and external partnership working re Children and Young People; supporting parents and families; relevant financial management.”

Departments covered:

- Children’s Services
- Any other Department doing work with or impacting on children or young people.

Holding the Executive and the Council to Account

- Scrutinising decisions which the Executive is planning to take (Pre-scrutiny)
- Scrutinising Executive decisions that have been taken before they are implemented (Call-in)
- Scrutinising Executive decisions after they have been implemented, whether shortly afterwards or as part of a wider review of policy to measure their effect



Scrutiny of Decisions

- Issues to consider when scrutinising decisions:
 - Are decisions evidence based?
 - Has appropriate consultation been undertaken?
 - Do decisions reflect the County Council's priorities?
 - Have alternative options been considered?

Call-in

- Only applies where a decision has been made but not yet implemented
- Can only be done within 5 working days of the date members have been notified of the decision
- A quorum of members can call a meeting of a select committee to consider an executive decision. The Committee must meet within 14 days of the of meeting being called

Call in options

The Committee must decide whether or not to recommend:

- That the decision be reconsidered by the relevant decision maker
- Where the decision is not in line with the Policy or Budget Framework, that the County Council should take that decision

Effect of call-in

- Any decision which is not in line with the Policy or Budget Framework cannot be implemented until the call in has been disposed of
- Urgent Key Decisions cannot be called in although they can still be scrutinised by the committee

Policy Development and Review

- Key work stream is to review and make recommendations either to the Executive or to the Full Council to assist in the development of future policies and strategies
 - Contribute to development of new or improved council policies and strategies
 - Proactive review where there may be gaps / a change in the law
- Select Committees also have a role in reviewing existing policy, to consider:
 - Do we have a clear and up to date approach?
 - Is it the right approach?
 - Are policies coherent and joined up?
 - Are the policies effective when put into action - is it working? Are they delivering what was intended?

Working Groups

- Group of Members identified to meet outside of the formal committee meetings
- Focuses on a topic where SC feels there is benefit to review
- Aims and timescale scoped, meetings held with relevant officers to discuss, evidence can be sought, culminates in summary of findings and recommendations where relevant
- Example: short break services

Items for the Agenda

- Any member of the Committee can request to put an item on the agenda of the next meeting of the committee
- Any member of the County Council can refer a matter to a Committee provided it is relevant to the function of that committee
- The Executive or the County Council may request that a Committee considers a matter referred by them

Topic Suggestions

- Suggestions welcome at any time to the Chairman or Democratic Support
- Make clear the reason for the request – is there evidence this is an area of concern? (e.g. performance data, frequently raised by constituents) – is it a County wide rather than local issue?
- Member Briefing Programme takes place monthly – for information items



Conclusion

- Role of scrutiny is wider than simply holding the Executive to account
- There needs to be an effective dialogue between scrutiny committees, the Executive and key officers to ensure that the work of committees contributes to policy setting and decision making

Role of Scrutiny

Any Questions?

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