

<b>Scrutiny Board :</b>	Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board
<b>Report Title</b>	Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2025/26
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 30 June 2025
<b>Report Author</b>	Connor Robinson – Democratic Services Officer <a href="mailto:Connor1_robinson@sandwell.gov.uk">Connor1_robinson@sandwell.gov.uk</a>
<b>Lead Officer</b>	James McLaughlin Assistant Chief Executive
<b>Appendices (if any)</b>	1. Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2. Scrutiny Review – Scoping Document

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Each municipal year the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board will produce a work programme which will set out what items the Board will consider. The Board will also consider what Scrutiny Review to undertake during the same period.

## 2. Recommendation

The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board is recommended to:-

- Approve the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2025/2026 (attached at appendix 1);
- Establish a working group to undertake a scrutiny review into the Transition to Adulthood services for the young people we care for and those who are care experienced;
- To adopt the scoping document (attached at appendix 2) as the terms of reference for the scrutiny review, and nominate members of the Board to undertake the review and feedback any findings and recommendations to a future Board meeting.

## 3. Background and Context

Work Programme

- 3.1 A strong and effective work programme underpins the work and approach of Scrutiny. However, it is good practice for work programmes to remain fluid, to allow for scrutiny of new and emerging issues in a timely manner.

- 3.2 Scrutiny is a member led and driven function, driven by members' commitment to improve services and thereby people's lives.
- 3.3 A work programming event for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board took place on 2 June 2025.
- 3.4 Scrutiny Procedure Rules allow any member to request that an item is added to a scrutiny board's work programme. Each request should be carefully assessed, using the agreed process, to ensure that resources can be prioritised and that the scrutiny activity will add value.

#### Scrutiny Review

- 3.5 The Board has responsibility to review / scrutinise 'corporate parenting, including services and support to care leavers'. The Board had held an engagement session with the Forum for Independent Young Adults, where a number of challenges were discussed at the session which the Board agreed required further consideration. It was determined that a scrutiny review would be the best option to do this.

### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 In April 2025 the Board met with the Forum for Independent Young Adults where care experienced young people were able to engage with the scrutiny board. A number of challenges and concerns were raised which the Board were interested in investigating further.

### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Scrutiny function is directly supported by the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Officers within the Council's Assistant Chief Executive directorate. Additional technical expertise and evidence on specific matters will be provided by officers within the various directorates of the authority.
- 6.2 The strategic resource implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to the Board at future meetings.

### **7. Legal and Governance Implications**

- 7.1 Local Government Act 2000 states that Councils operating executive arrangements must also make provision for the appointment of overview and scrutiny committees.
- 7.2 Further powers relating to overview and scrutiny are set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Localism Act 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- 7.3 Any legal and governance implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to the Board at future meetings.

- 11.4 The Board under its terms of reference had the responsibility to scrutinise corporate parenting, including services and support to care leavers.

## **8. Risks**

- 8.1 There were no direct Risks Implications associated with the report.

## **9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)**

- 9.1 In January 2025 Cabinet adopted 'Care Experience' as a protected characteristic which established it as an equivalent to the statutory protected characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010 when discharging its powers and duties.
- 9.2 The Board was committed to promoting and ensuring the Council was standing by its policy and ensuring those with care experience were being recognised and fairly treated across Council services.

## **10. Other Relevant Implications**

- 10.1 Corporate parenting - the Board was committed to upholding the upmost standards when it came to corporate parenting. The scrutiny review into the transition to adulthood would provide the Board with the current service provision and allow the Board to identify any concerns or oversights that needed addressing. It was hoped the review would allow the Board to hear from those with care experience and feed their views and life story into the final review recommendations.

## **11. Background Documents**

None.

## **12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?**

- Growing up in Sandwell  
Sandwell Council is committed to be a good Corporate Parent for the children we care for, ensuring that those children are fully a part of our 'family'. The Council is also focused to ensure all children and young people have the same opportunities to achieve their full potential to establish high aspirations.