

By: Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

To: Scrutiny Board – 13 July 2011

Subject: **Select Committee Work Programme**

Summary: To receive an update on the current Topic Review Programme and the resources available to deliver the programme.

1. Resources to Deliver the Select Committee Work Programme

(1) There are currently two and a half FTE Research officers supporting the Select Committee topic review programme who are line managed from the Business Strategy Division of the Business Strategy and Support Directorate. They are continuing to work on their respective Select Committee. They are supported by three Democratic Services Officers from the Overview and Scrutiny team who also support the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees. In addition there is one Research Officer who is dedicated entirely to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a Research Officer to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, who in addition to supporting the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee also carries out a number of specific projects to support the development of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

2. Select Committee – Topic Review Programme

Select Committee – Attainment at Key Stage 2

(1) The Select Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr C Wells is looking at the reasons for variations in Key Stage 2 performance within Kent Schools, with a focus on schools in areas of deprivation. It has selected 44 schools from anonymised data which will form the study groups for the review.

(2) During June/July the Select Committee has had briefing sessions from Heads of Service and also with officers from the 11 Districts (none of the schools identified were within the Dartford area) which cover the selected schools, in preparation for visits in October 2011. It is likely that the Committee will visit 15 schools.

(3) The timetable has been revised to take account of the evidence gathering needed to support the review and availability of members and the school diary. Further evidence will be gathered in mid Sept to early November. The Committee will meet during November to discuss the focus groups, findings and areas for recommendation. It is expected that the report will go to Cabinet in April 2012 and will then be submitted to the next available County Council.

Select Committee: Dementia

(4) The Select Committee on Dementia under the Chairmanship of Mrs Trudy Dean is continuing with its work. The hearings were concluded in

April, after which two consultation events aimed at carers and people living with dementia took place.

(5) Written evidence continues to be gathered and a few requests for evidence remain outstanding. Video-evidence is being taken from a number of carers who indicated a wish to contribute to the review, but were unable to travel to a hearing or consultation. This information will be edited and made available to Members shortly after interviews are completed.

(6) The Professionals' Focus Group met for the second time in June to comment on potential areas of recommendation suggested by the evidence. The work of the Group has informed a draft list of potential areas for recommendation to be discussed by Members at a meeting in early July. Following further consideration of the evidence Members will formulate a set of draft recommendations and the Committee's report will be written in the summer. Further consultation with contributors is then planned before the report is finalised. The timetable for the review is challenging but it is intended that the report will be submitted to Cabinet in November and to County Council on 15 December 2011.

Select Committee - The Student Journey

(7) The Select Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr Kit Smith has started its evidence gathering sessions and is interviewing key stakeholders including representatives from business, education and obtaining evidence from young people. It will continue gathering evidence until October 2011 (with a break for the school holidays).

(8) The Committee will be meeting at the end of July to signpost areas for possible recommendation. It is intended that information on these areas will be shared with the Scrutiny Board and the relevant Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees (POSCs) in September 2011.

(9) It is intended that the Select Committee will submit its final report to the Cabinet in April 2012 and to County Council in May 2012.

Annual Report on progress with Select Committee Recommendations

The Annual report on progress with Recommendations from Select Committee 2009 -2010 will be considered by County Council on 21 July 2011.

Select Committee Work Programme

(1) To date, although there has been a standing item on all POSC agenda's for some time, there have not been any suggestions for Select Committee topics. Members of the Board are requested to suggest ways in which greater publicity could to be given to obtaining suggestions for future Select Committee topic reviews.

<p>4. Recommendation: that the progress of the Select Committees on Educational Attainment at Key Stage 2, Dementia and the Student Journey be noted.</p>
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Background Papers – Nil