



Strong Families, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

23 June 2022

Report title	Cross Party Scrutiny Review Group – SEND Written Statement of Action	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Chris Burden Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Governance	
Accountable employee(s)	Brenda Wile Email	Deputy Director of Education 01902 Brenda.wile@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Julia Cleary Email	Scrutiny and Systems Manager Julia.cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	14 June 2022
	Joint Children’s/adults Social Care and Education Leadership Team	16 June 2022

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Consider and agree the remit, terms of reference and frequency of meetings for the Cross-Party Scrutiny Review Group.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the terms of reference, remit, and frequency of meetings, for the Scrutiny Review Group relating to the SEND Written Statement of Action.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the meeting of Full Council on Wednesday 1 December 2021, the following motion was agreed:

“This Council notes the findings of the inspection of SEND services within Wolverhampton.

Council agrees to explore the formation of a Review Group, outside of the existing scrutiny process, to monitor progress, in consultation with the SEND Partnership Board and other partnership bodies and organisations, of SEND services, and provide regular, dedicated scrutiny and support to assist in both the embedding of the strengths that exist within the service and to improve where weaknesses have been identified.

Council agrees that if the parties consulted agree that such an approach has merit, then proposals be brought forward to full Council for approval having consulted with the partners above.

Council delegates responsibility to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel for the selection of both Review Group numbers and membership.”

- 2.2 The required consultation was carried out and a draft remit agreed for the Review Group at the meeting of Full Council on 6 April 2022.

- 2.3 Full Council recommended:

- a) *That the Deputy Director for Education in consultation with the Scrutiny and Systems Manager submit a report to the Strong Families, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel providing details on the remit, terms of reference, frequency of meetings, membership and governance arrangements for the proposed scrutiny review group.*
- b) *That this report be considered at the first meeting of the Strong Families, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel in the 2022-2023 municipal year.*

- 2.4 The draft remit, membership and frequency for the Review Group is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The Written Statement of Action (WSoA) is monitored every eight weeks by the SEND Partnership Board, of which the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is a member.
- 3.2 Following discussion with relevant parties and as agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 8 April 2022, the WSoA will also be monitored by a Cross-Party Scrutiny Review Group which will provide updates to the SFCYP Scrutiny Panel every six months.
- 3.3 Strong Families, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel is requested to consider the draft remit, membership, and frequency of meetings for the Review Group as attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Review Group will not be a decision-making body but may upon conclusion of its work, make recommendations to Full Council or any other appropriate body to consider. As such, at this stage there are no financial implications. [TS/17062022/N]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The scrutiny review group, will be a working group outside of the formal arrangements of the Local Government Act 1972, and will be set up to consider the Written Statement of Action, its progress, and any challenges that may occur.
- 5.2 The WSOA is necessary and in accordance with relevant legislation, under the Children's Act 2014 and Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, following the recent SEND inspection. [AS10062022/A]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 There is not a requirement for the Written Statement of Action or the scrutiny review group to have an Equality Impact Assessment. However, as the work of the review group progresses advice will be sought from the Equality & Diversity service within the local authority as and when required. This is particularly important since the purpose of the Written Statement of Action is to address weaknesses in provision in the local area for a vulnerable and protected group. These SEND CYP are often disproportionately affected through exclusions and can also be considered as 'hard to place' in respect of school admissions and in other areas of school and wider life opportunities. For this reason, the Council places additional focus on the monitoring of performance data against all areas for development within the service areas ensuring that where there are gaps there are mitigations to address these.

7.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1** Draft remit, terms of reference, membership, and frequency of meetings.
- Appendix 2** WSoA Reporting Timetable