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PUBLIC

To: Members of Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People

Thursday, 12 December 2024

Dear Councillor

Please attend a meeting of the **Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People** to be held at **2.30 pm** on **Friday, 20 December 2024** at **Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock**; the agenda for which is set out below.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Helen E. Barrington'.

Helen Barrington
Director of Legal Services

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
To receive apologies for absence (if any)
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of interest (if any)
3. Public Questions (30 minute maximum in total) (Pages 1 - 2)

(Questions may be submitted to be answered by the Scrutiny Committee, or Council officers who are attending the meeting as witnesses, on any item that is within the scope of the Committee. Please see the procedure for the submission of questions at the end of this agenda)

4. Requisition for a meeting of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee
- People

In pursuance of Rule 4 of Appendix 5 of the Derbyshire County Council Constitution Councillors R George, S Burfoot and C Dale have signed a requisition to the Chairman of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People to call an extraordinary meeting as follows:

Purpose of the requisition

On the 14 November 2024 Ofsted published its Area SEND inspection report of the Derbyshire Local Area Partnership where it detailed its finding of “widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently”.

That report comes shortly after the publication of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s annual review letter which identified multiple cases of fault by this authority in the way it administered complaints involving SEND.

Both reports detail serious failings in the way the authority discharged its responsibility to children and young people with SEND with Ofsted concluding “...that their needs have not been met for far too long”.

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure the Committee fulfils its role of holding the authority to account, help secure the efficient delivery of council services, and drive improvements, and in particular its role and functions as set out in Appendix 8 of the Constitution.

Amongst other things the meeting will:

- Invite the Cabinet Member and the temporary Executive Director for Children’s Services to attend and inform the Committee of the findings and recommendations contained in the Ofsted report, particularly those that directly appertain to the council;
- Receive an explanation from the Cabinet Member and temporary Executive Director for Children’s Services as to why the council and the local area partnership allowed the situation

detailed in the report to arise and why it then allowed the needs of children and young people to go unmet for so long.

- Satisfy itself that the authority takes those finding seriously and assess whether the authority sees that report “as a pivotal opportunity for reflection, healing, and ultimately, progress”;
- Allow the Committee to be informed of, and assess and comment on, the adequacy of the measures the Cabinet Member is proposing to take or is already taking in order to secure rapid improvement in the SEND provision and outcomes for children and young people;
- Determine how the Committee shall proceed to scrutinise and hold to account the Cabinet Member as he and the local area partnership prepare to submit a priority action plan as required by Ofsted.

The next scheduled meeting of this Committee is the 26th February 2025. Given the grave nature of Ofsted’s findings and recommendations, and of its requirement that urgent steps are taken to address the identified areas for priority action and areas for improvements, it would not be appropriate for this Committee to wait 3 months before having the opportunity to consider this report or this issue which affects the county and its inhabitants.