

Report of the Director of People

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 September 2015

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS SCRUTINY CHAMPIONS

Purpose	To present a proposal for an approach to enable Scrutiny Councillors to act as champions for children's rights when assessing the work of the Council.
Content	This report relates to the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme and the role of scrutiny in monitoring its implementation across and council and impact. It contains a proposal for discussion.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give their views• Endorse the proposals• Endorse the recommendation of the report
Lead Councillor(s)	Christine Richards (Deputy Leader) – Services for Children & Young People.
Lead Officer(s)	Chris Sivers – Director of People
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Council's Scrutiny Programme Committee is particularly interested in the way the Children & Young People's (CYP) Rights Scheme has been implemented across the Council and its impact.

1.2 This proposal is for an approach to enable scrutiny to act as champions for children's rights when assessing the work of the Council.

2. Proposed Model

2.1 Questioning strategies used by scrutiny could be amended so that if any scrutiny activity is deemed to have a direct or indirect impact on children and young people (aged 0-18 years), scrutiny councillors can both champion children's rights and scrutinise how due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has been paid.

2.2 Questions could be developed following a training session based on the guiding principles of the UNCRC. This will ensure that children's rights are scrutinised in a way that mirrors the children's rights impact assessment already used within the City and County of Swansea, ensuring consistency of approach. The 4 guiding principles of the UNCRC are:

- **Best Interests (Article 3)**

All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests

- **Non-Discrimination (Article 2):**

All rights apply to all children without exception

- **Survival and Development (Article 6):**

Every child has the inherent right to life

- **Participation (Article 12):**

The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

2.3 An awareness raising training session will be held to develop scrutiny councillors' understanding of children's rights and the policy context within which they sit in Swansea.

2.4 The session will enable members to feel comfortable and supported to both champion children's rights and apply them in their scrutiny role.

2.5 The session will cover:

- An overview of the UNCRC including its history and context internationally, nationally and locally and a more in depth consideration of the 4 guiding principles;
- An overview of the CYP Rights Scheme and its implementation in policy and practice since its launch including how the guiding principles have provided a framework for assessment; and
- Tailored approach to scrutiny of this work to familiarise committee members with the process in order for them to feel comfortable using it and ensure it is fit for purpose.

3. Legal Implications

3.1 There are no legal implications.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications as the training session will be delivered in house by Council Officers.

5. Recommendations

- a. A training session is delivered to the Scrutiny Programme Committee and other scrutiny councillors to develop their understanding of children's rights in order to champion them and apply them in their role. A session has been provisionally arranged to take place on 29 October 2015;
- b. Scrutiny questioning strategies (where relevant) incorporate the guiding principles of the UNCRC as a means of impact assessing children's rights; and
- c. The Scrutiny Programme Committee test the new approach using the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Report which is being presented to the committee meeting on 9 November 2015.

Background Papers:

Children & Young People's Rights Scheme

<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/childrensrightsscheme>

Date: 28 August 2015

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Paul Cridland