

Scrutiny Scoping Document

Title of Review topic	
School Attendance	
Objectives	
What does the Board/Task and Finish Group hope to achieve by considering the topic?	The review aims to undertake a comprehensive examination of the challenges associated with school attendance across the city. It will assess the effectiveness of current interventions, evaluate the support provided to schools, and identify additional evidence-based approaches that could further improve attendance outcomes.
What will be the indicators of success?	<p>Success will be demonstrated through the development of clear, well-informed recommendations to the Cabinet Member.</p> <p>These recommendations will acknowledge that individual schools retain statutory responsibility for their own attendance management while identifying areas where the Council can strengthen guidance, support, and strategic oversight.</p>
When will the review be evaluated?	The review will be evaluated through ongoing monitoring of attendance data by SB2, ensuring sustained oversight and the ability to track progress against agreed actions.
Methodology	
What will be included in the scope of the review?	The review will encompass all schools within the city, including primary, secondary, and special schools, to ensure a holistic understanding of attendance patterns and challenges across different educational settings.
What will be excluded from the scope?	Elective Home Education will not be included within this review, as it is subject to a separate dedicated Task and Finish exercise.
Does the review link with any existing strategies or policies? Is this currently being reviewed/refreshed?	The review aligns with a range of statutory frameworks and national guidance, including <i>Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)</i> , the <i>Education Act 2002</i> , the <i>Children and Families Act 2014</i> , the Section 19 Policy, and other relevant statutory guidance. These documents collectively shape the expectations placed on local authorities and schools in improving attendance.
How will the review be carried out? e.g. surveys, site visits, select committees etc.	<p>The review will be delivered through a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of current attendance data and trends. • Examination of the Council's current offer to schools, including support resources and intervention pathways. • Engagement with Headteachers to gather frontline insight into barriers, good practice, and opportunities for improvement. •

Barriers and Risks	
What are the barriers and risks to the review?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key risk relates to the limited timeframe remaining within the municipal year, which may constrain the depth of investigation or limit the number of stakeholders who can be engaged within available timescales. • Any updates to national attendance guidance or statutory responsibilities (e.g., changes linked to the 2024 Attendance Guidance) may impact the relevance of emerging findings. • A short review period may reduce the ability to examine all relevant themes (e.g., SEND attendance, persistent absence, early help pathways) in detail.
How can these be managed/overcome?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review will focus on what can realistically be achieved before the election period, prioritising areas where the evidence base is strongest and where recommendations can be made with confidence. • Track policy developments throughout the review and adapt scope or recommendations if required. • Reference the most up-to-date guidance in the final report. • Prioritise the highest-impact areas based on data and risk. • Consider setting out additional topics for follow-up work in the next municipal year.
Equality and Diversity	
Does the review have any potential implications for Equality and Diversity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially – to consider whether any demographic groups are more affected by poor attendance
Timescales and reporting procedure	
List any key dates/events which might impact on the timescales of the review	
Anticipated number of meetings	2-3
Scrutiny Board portfolio	SB2
Cabinet Member portfolio	Education and Skills
Anticipated reporting date to Scrutiny Board	
Anticipated reporting route – Cabinet Member/Cabinet	
Report of.....	
Comms involvement	
Task and Finish Group Members	Gardiner, Mutton (Chair), Vohra (co-opted)