



Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board

Date: 24 June 2014

Subject: Sources of work for the Scrutiny Board

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Scrutiny Boards are responsible for ensuring that items of scrutiny work come from a strategic approach as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest.
2. This report provides information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference. In consultation with the relevant Directors and Executive Board Members, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider and confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

Recommendation

3. Members are requested to use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To assist the Scrutiny Board in effectively managing its workload for the forthcoming municipal year, this report provides information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Scrutiny Boards are responsible for ensuring that items of scrutiny work come from a strategic approach as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest.
- 2.2 The alignment of the Scrutiny Boards to the City Priorities continues to promote a more strategic and outward looking scrutiny function that focuses on the "Best City for..." priorities, as set out within the City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015. This city-wide partnership plan summarises the key outcomes and priorities to be delivered by the Council and its partners.

3.0 Main issues

Best Council Plan

- 3.1 A refresh of the Best Council Plan was agreed at Executive Board in March 2014, to reflect the progress made over the past year and the significant changes to the context in which the council is working, and to fully align it with the approved 2014/15 budget. The resulting 'Best Council Plan – Plan on a Page' is attached as Appendix 1.

City Priority Plan

- 3.2 As set out within its terms of reference, this Scrutiny Board is authorised to review outcomes, targets and priorities within the "Best City....to live" priorities, as set out within the City Priority Plan:

"Leeds needs investment in new homes and our aim is to attract maximum investment from the private sector and government. We will finalise our housing planning policy to grow the city in a sustainable way, while maintaining the distinctiveness of communities and a green city. We will improve our existing homes, making them more energy efficient and easier to heat. Over the next four years we will:

The four-year priorities	Headline indicators
Maximise regeneration investment to increase housing choice and affordability within sustainable neighbourhoods.	Increase the number of new homes built per year. Increase the number of new affordable homes built each year. Increase the number of long-term empty properties brought back into use.

Enable growth of the city whilst protecting the distinctive green character of the city.	Improve the percentage of people satisfied with the quality of the environment.
Improve housing conditions and energy efficiency.	Increase the number of properties improved with energy efficiency measures. Increase the number of properties which achieved the decency standard.

In determining items of scrutiny work this year, the Scrutiny Board is encouraged to explore how it can add value to the work of delivering on the city priorities.

Other sources of Scrutiny work

- 3.3 The Scrutiny Boards' terms of reference are also determined by reference to Directors' delegations. As such, Scrutiny Boards have always challenged service directorates across the full range of council activities and the Scrutiny Board may therefore undertake pieces of scrutiny work in line with its terms of reference, as considered appropriate.
- 3.4 During the course of the last year, each Scrutiny Board has redefined the performance management information that it receives in line with its own requirements. The Board's performance monitoring role can often lead to the identification of areas for more detailed scrutiny. The quarter 4 performance report for 2013/14 is included as a separate item on the agenda.
- 3.5 Other common sources of work include pre-decision scrutiny, requests for scrutiny and other corporate referrals. Also attached for Members' consideration are the latest Executive Board minutes (Appendix 2).
- 3.6 Scrutiny Boards have always sought to work in partnership with one another where appropriate, in particular in cross-cutting areas which span more than one Scrutiny Board's terms of reference. In setting the work programme for the coming year, the Board is encouraged to consider areas of work which may benefit from a partnership approach.
- 3.7 The Board is also required to be formally consulted during the development of key policies which form part of the council's budget and policy framework. It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Board will be asked to contribute to the development of one such document over the coming year:
- Initial budget proposals
- 3.8 The Board's work programme will also be influenced through its relationship with the Tenant Scrutiny Board. There is a separate report elsewhere on the agenda which describes the relationship between the two bodies.

Areas of Scrutiny work brought forward from the previous year

- 3.8 Arising from the work undertaken in 2013/14, there are a number of areas of ongoing work which the Board identified for potential further scrutiny in 2014/15:

- Work with the furniture re-use organisations to provide cookers to tenants in need
- Pre-decision scrutiny of the review of local lettings policies
- Analysis of the outcomes of the programme of Annual Tenancy Visits.
- Rent arrears
- East Leeds Extension and East Leeds Orbital Road progress

3.9 The Board also received a number of regular reports last year on specific issues of interest. Members will need to consider which of these reports continue to be relevant. Where such items are retained on the Board's work programme, it is proposed that they are coordinated with the quarterly performance monitoring reports:

- Progress of the review of housing management services
- Position statements on the Housing Revenue, General Fund, Regeneration and Capital Programme accounts
- Housing on Brownfield Land progress tracking

3.10 The Board will continue to track progress against outstanding recommendations from previous scrutiny inquiries in relation to affordable housing by private developers; housing growth; private rented sector housing.

3.11 The Sustainable Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board intends to carry out pre-decision scrutiny at the appropriate time on proposals for the apportionment of the Community Infrastructure Levy and prioritisation of spending. As previously reported, the Board has agreed to invite a representative of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board to join it when it undertakes this piece of work.

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 It is recognised that in order to enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, each Scrutiny Board needs to establish an early dialogue with the Directors and Executive Board Members holding the relevant portfolios.

4.1.2 The Director of Environment and Housing, the Director of City Development and the Executive Members for Neighbourhoods, Planning & Personnel and Transport & Economy have been invited to attend today's meeting to discuss priority areas of work with the Scrutiny Board.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.

4.2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules state that, where appropriate, all terms of reference for work undertaken by Scrutiny Boards will include 'to review how and to what effect consideration has been given to the impact of a service or policy on all equality areas, as set out in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme'.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the City Priorities. This particular Scrutiny Board is authorised to review outcomes, targets and priorities within the Business Plan and “Best City....to live” priorities, as set out within the City Priority Plan.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 Over the last few years of Scrutiny Board work, experience has shown that the process is more effective and adds greater value if the Board seeks to minimise the number of substantial inquiries running at one time and focus its resources on one key issue at a time.

4.4.2 Before deciding to undertake an inquiry, the Scrutiny Board is advised to consider the current workload of the Scrutiny Board and the available resources to carry out the work.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Scrutiny Boards are responsible for ensuring that items of scrutiny work come from a strategic approach as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest. This report provides information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board’s terms of reference. In consultation with the relevant Directors and Executive Board Members, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider and confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Members are requested to use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

7.0 Background papers¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council’s website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.