



Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 19 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. 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' (Appendix 1).

City Priority Plan and alignment with the Strategic Partnership Board

- 3.2 As set out within its terms of reference, this Scrutiny Board is authorised to review or scrutinise the performance of the Childrens Trust Board. In doing so, the Scrutiny Board will review outcomes, targets and priorities within the Best City...for children and families priorities, as set out within the City Priority Plan. These priorities are as follows:

Building a child-friendly city – *improving outcomes for children and families.*

With a focus on:

- Ensuring the best start in life
- Reducing the number of looked after children
- Improving school attendance
- Reducing NEETs
- Raising educational standards
- Ensuring sufficiency of school places

- 3.3 In line with the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, the Scrutiny Board will also continue to act as 'critical friend' to the Childrens Trust Board through an annual assessment of how well the Partnership is working in practice.

The Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) 2011-15 (refresh 2013) attached as appendix 2, details the focus or 'obsessions' of the Childrens Trust Board. It is a statement of intent and ambition which details how a positive and significant

difference will be made to the lives of over 180,000 children and young people in the City. The CYPP is due to be refreshed in the near future when an updated version will be shared with the Scrutiny Board.

- 3.4 In determining items of scrutiny work this year, the Scrutiny Board is encouraged to explore how it can add value to the work of the Partnership in delivering on the city priorities and the obsessions and outcomes detailed in the Children and Young Peoples Plan. The Executive Board Member for Children and Families and the Director of Childrens Services have been invited to the meeting to highlight particular areas where further scrutiny could add value and improve services.

Other sources of Scrutiny work

- 3.5 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. In addition to the functions outlined with the Scrutiny Board's terms of reference, other sources of work can be 'requests for scrutiny' and corporate referrals.
- 3.5 The Board's performance monitoring and critical friend role can often lead to the identification of areas for more detailed scrutiny. A performance report is scheduled into the work program in July 2014. The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board draft annual report is also scheduled for discussion in July 2014.
- 3.6 Other common sources of work include pre-decision scrutiny, requests for scrutiny and other corporate referrals.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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 initial budget proposals for 2015/16 later in the municipal year.
- 3.9 Last year the Scrutiny Board identified two particular areas of work which were not undertaken these were:
- An inquiry into staying safe in school
 - An inquiry into the voice of influence of children in Leeds.

The Board also expressed a desire to undertake pre-decision Scrutiny into the developing School Transport Policy relating to changes made under the Children and Families Act 2014 and in accordance with any government school transport related guidance.

3.10 The Board should consider if a similar or related issue is already being examined by Scrutiny or has been considered by Scrutiny recently and if the matter raised is of sufficient significance and has the potential for Scrutiny to produce realistic recommendations that could be implemented and lead to tangible improvements. A list of previous scrutiny inquiries relating to Children and Families work area is attached as appendix 3.

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 It is recognised that in order to enable Scrutiny to focus on areas of priority, each Scrutiny Board needs to establish an early dialogue with the Director and Executive Board Member holding the relevant portfolio and also the Partnership Chair.

4.1.2 The Director of Children's Services and the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Children and Families/CTB Chair have been invited to attend the meeting to discuss priorities.

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 following plans are relevant to the work of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Families):

- The Leeds Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011 -15
- Best Council Plan 2013-17

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. A draft of the work schedule has been attached as appendix 4 which reflects the information detailed in this report where possible.

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 Director and Executive Board Member, 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.