

**Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment and Housing)**

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**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. The vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015 (Appendix 1) also recognises that resources to support the Scrutiny function are, (like all other Council functions), under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:
  - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame;
  - Avoid pure “information items” except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review;
  - Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
  - Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
  - Balanced in terms of the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and as to the type of Scrutiny taking place;

- Sufficiently flexible to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.
3. 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 areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year. Neil Evans, Director of Environment and Housing, has been invited to today's meeting.

### **Recommendations**

4. Members are requested to;
- Use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to draw up a list of areas for Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.
  - Request that the Chair and the Scrutiny Officer consult with the relevant Director and Executive Board Members regarding resources in line with the agreed Vision for Scrutiny and report back to the next meeting with a draft work programme.

## **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.

## **3.0 Main issues**

### Best Council Plan

- 3.1 A refresh of the Best Council Plan was agreed at Executive Board in March 2015, to reflect the progress made over the past year and the significant changes to the context in which the council is working. The 'Best Council Plan – Detailed Objectives for 2015-16' is attached as Appendix 2.

### Other sources of Scrutiny work

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Other common sources of work include pre-decision scrutiny, requests for scrutiny and other corporate referrals. 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.

### Areas of Scrutiny work brought forward from the previous year

- 3.4 The following reviews were commenced by the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board last year but unfortunately were not concluded due to capacity issues:
- The role of Police and Community Support Officers linked to local integrated partnership working;
  - Determining recycling options for non-AWC households;
  - The city's Integrated Waste Strategy.
- 3.5 The above matters now fall within the remit of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board. As such, in consideration of the Board's work programme this year, Members are asked to consider whether or not to continue with these reviews.
- 3.6 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board also commenced an inquiry last year in relation to Housing Mix. Whilst the Chair is keen to see this inquiry progressed this year, the Council's Scrutiny Officer has advised that housing policy and investment

falls within the remit of the Director of City Development and not the Director of Environment and Housing. As such, at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the City Development Scrutiny Board considered and agreed to progress this inquiry in collaboration with the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board.

#### **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. The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council in May 2015 also states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.

#### **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 the Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the best council objectives.

#### **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

4.4.1 Experience has shown that the Scrutiny 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 The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council also recognises that resources to support the Scrutiny function are, (like all other Council functions), under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:

- Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
- Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
- Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

#### **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, Executive Board Members and Scrutiny Officer, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider 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 draw up a list of areas for Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.
- Request that the Chair and the Scrutiny Officer consult with the relevant Director and Executive Board Members regarding resources in line with the agreed Vision for Scrutiny and report back to the next meeting with a draft work programme.

## **7.0 Background papers<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.