

Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 22 June 2017

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 Scrutiny¹, attached at Appendix 1, recognises that like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are 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;

¹ Agreed by Full Council on 21 May 2015.

- 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 priority areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

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 Principal 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 more detailed 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 by Council in February 2016 to reflect the significant changes to the context in which the council is working. The resulting 'Best Council Plan – Summary' is attached as Appendix 2.

Matters identified by previous Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

- 3.2 During the preceding municipal year (2016/17), the following matters were identified by the previous Scrutiny Board for possible consideration during 2017/18:
- Sickness rates / monitoring.
 - Continued oversight of financial performance through the monthly Financial Health Monitoring reports
 - Follow-up the areas arising from the budget/ Best Council Plan actions agreed by Executive Board, as follows:
 - (a) As part of the development of the 'Leeds £' approach, there should be a review of joint funding arrangements in order to help ensure a consistent and strategic approach that is fair and equitable to all partners involved;
 - (b) Where any directorate is anticipating a significant budget overspend, support be given to the need for the section 151 Officer and the relevant Director to work closely and proactively with the relevant Scrutiny Board in order to provide suitable assurance that there is robust financial risk management and transition planning in place;
 - (c) For all proposed budget savings, there is a clear narrative that explains how the savings will be achieved, including (but not limited to) service redesign and service commissioning/ decommissioning.
 - Continuing oversight of the Council's use of and expenditure on agency staff. Latterly, in 2016/17, the Board shifted its focus to workforce planning, considering the strategies in place for succession planning and workforce development under continued and sustained austerity.
 - Maintaining an oversight of the Council's procurement arrangements, and specifically focusing on the levels of 'off contract' spending and non-compliance with the Contract Procedure Rules (CPR).

- Continuing oversight of the Council's resilience and prioritisation of the use of ICT resources, to help support the future success of many of the Council's ambitions and targets.
- As part of the Council's future budget development, focusing on how the Council continues to maximise its income through appropriate fees and charges.
- Overseeing the development of appropriate performance indicators and maintaining an overview of progress against the Council's ambitions set out in the Best Council Plan.
- Receiving the formal response to the Scrutiny Inquiry into Commissioning and following-up on the recommendations.

3.3 It should be noted that in anticipation of the Scrutiny Board's desire to maintain an overview of the Council's financial health, the following suite of financial reports are included elsewhere on the agenda:

- Treasury Management Outturn Report 2016/17
- Financial Performance – Outturn Financial Year ended 31/3/17
- Financial Health Monitoring 2017/18 – Month 2 (May 2017)

3.4 In considering its priorities for 2017/18, members of the Scrutiny Board are reminded of the changes to the Scrutiny Board's terms of reference from the previous municipal year (i.e. 2016/17), including the inclusion of the following areas (delegated to the Director of Communities and Environment):

- Equalities;
- Registrars functions;
- Licensing functions;
- Local Land Charges functions; and
- Council tax processing and billing arrangements.

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.

3.6 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.

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 like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are 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 Principal 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 more detailed work programme.

7.0 Background papers²

7.1 None

² 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.