

**Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)**

**Date: 21 December 2017**

**Subject: Work Schedule – December 2017**

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

**1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

**2 Main issues**

- 2.1 At its initial meeting in June 2017, the Scrutiny Board discussed a range of matters for possible inclusion within the overall work schedule for 2017/18. The areas discussed included a range of matters which were then used to help formulate an outline work schedule.
- 2.2 The latest iteration of the work schedule is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board – subject to any identified and agreed amendments.
- 2.3 Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 13 December 2017 were not available at the time of publication, but will be available and circulated appropriately in advance of the meeting. The Scrutiny Board will be asked to consider and note the Executive Board minutes, insofar as they relate to the remit of the Scrutiny Board; and identify any matter where specific scrutiny activity may be warranted, and therefore subsequently incorporated into the work schedule.

Developing the work schedule

- 2.4 The work schedule should not be considered to be a fixed and rigid schedule, it should be recognised as something that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.

- 2.5 However, when considering any developments and/or modifications to the work schedule, effort should be undertaken to:
- Avoid unnecessary 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.
  - Avoid pure “information items” except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review
  - Seek advice about available resources and relevant timings taking into consideration the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and the type of Scrutiny taking place
  - Build in sufficient flexibility to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year
- 2.6 In addition, in order to deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to take a flexible approach and undertaken activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits, where deemed appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

#### Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

##### Service area performance

- 2.7 The work schedule reflects the Board’s discussion about monitoring specific service areas. Any updated proposals will be reported to the Scrutiny Board.

##### Business Rates Inquiry

- 2.8 At the beginning of the municipal year, the Scrutiny Board identified ‘Business Rates’ as a specific inquiry topic. The Scrutiny Board has considered a range of information to date.
- 2.9 As part of the inquiry, members of the Scrutiny Board to attended and observed a Valuation Tribunal Hearing on 12 December 2017. A briefing note was prepared in advance of the hearing and is attached at Appendix 2 for information. A verbal update on the Valuation Tribunal Hearing will be provided at the meeting.
- 2.10 It is still proposed that members of the Scrutiny Board meet with representatives of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), in order to better understand the role of the VOA and consider any associated matters relevant to the collection of Business Rates. At the time of writing this report, precise details of this meeting remain to be finalised.
- 2.11 The Scrutiny Board may also find it useful to invite a representative from the Valuation Tribunal Service to discuss aspects of the Valuation Tribunal Hearing and the associated process.
- 2.12 It is also intended to request a meeting with the relevant / responsible government minister. Details of this meeting remain to be finalised.

##### Apprenticeships Levy

- 2.13 At the Scrutiny Board meeting in October 2017, members of the Scrutiny Board agreed that arrangements should be made for a working group meeting in early 2018

to review progress against the identified 'inquiry points' set out in the apprenticeship levy paper.

- 2.14 Following further discussions with relevant officers, it is proposed to arrange a working group meeting in late February 2018, once the outcome of the Council's bid to the Education and Skills Funding Agency to become an Employer Provider is known. A specific date and time remains to be finalised.

#### Commissioning

- 2.15 Reflecting the outcome of the Board's discussion in October 2017, it is proposed to request a 6-monthly update report on 'People's Services Commissioning', detailing any significant developments and/or proposals of a strategic nature.

#### Outcome of discussions at the meeting

- 2.16 Details of any specific outcomes from the meeting may need to be considered and reflected in an updated work schedule, including any longer-term consideration of future budget developments or proposals.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the matters outlined in this report and agree (or amend) the overall work schedule (as presented at Appendix 1) as the basis for the Board's work for the remainder of 2017/18.

### **4. Background papers<sup>1</sup>**

- 4.1 None used

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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.