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## Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Scrutiny Board: Central and Corporate Functions

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010

### Subject: Input to the Work Programme 2010/11 - Sources of Work and Establishing the Board's Priorities

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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## 1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides information and guidance to assist the Board develop its work programme for 2010/11.

## 2.0 Background Information

2.1 Relevant information from the following key sources have been extracted appropriate to this Board's responsibilities and attached to this paper to assist Members in this process (Appendix 1):

- Council Business Plan 2008 – 2011 – Executive Summary
- List of work undertaken in the past six years.
- The relevant extract from the latest forward plan

2.2 Other sources of work will continue to be 'requests for scrutiny' and corporate referrals.

2.3 At the July meeting the Executive Board Member will be in attendance to discuss his portfolio. The Board will also receive quarterly performance information. This information may identify areas for Scrutiny.

## 3.0 Work programming

3.1 Appropriate officers have been invited to attend this meeting to contribute to discussions about the Board's work programme.

3.2 Following these discussions, the Board is asked to agree an outline work programme that prioritises the issues to be investigated.

#### **4.0 Guidance**

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. This view was echoed within the findings of the KPMG external audit report on the Scrutiny function in Leeds

4.2 The Board is advised to consider the benefits of single item agendas (excluding miscellaneous information and minutes) in order to focus on all the relevant evidence and complete an inquiry in a shorter period of time. There are various mechanisms available to assist the Board in concluding inquiries quickly, such as working groups and site visits.

4.3 The agreed Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny which sits within the Council's Constitution states;

*"The responsibility of those setting scrutiny work programmes is, therefore, to ensure that items of work come from a strategic approach as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest.*

*It is recognised that Scrutiny Boards have a 'watching brief' role. In addition information is required for members' own development process, particularly as membership of the Boards is changed annually.*

*However, it is also recognised that agendas are often filled up with reports for this purpose, which takes up time for both officers and Members. Where Scrutiny Boards wish to ask questions at a general or more strategic level and/or be updated on issues already considered in detail, the facility of Members' Questions – where a verbal exchange replaces written reports - should be used.*

*It is expected that where ever possible prior notification is given of the likely questions to be asked".*

4.4 For the past couple of years the Children's Services Board in particular has developed the approach of devoting one meeting per quarter to 'horizon scan' issues and consider performance management. This includes discussing with Executive Members and officers relevant issues. This is acknowledged within the KPMG report as good practice.

#### **5.0 Recommendations**

5.1 Members are requested to use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to develop its work programme.

#### Background Papers

Council Business Plan 2008 - 2011