



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

Date: 17th June 2011

Subject: SOURCES OF WORK AND AREAS OF PRIORITY FOR THE SCRUTINY BOARD

Electoral Wards Affected:

☐

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

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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 2011/12.

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):

- Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Board
- List of work undertaken in the past two years
- The relevant extract from the latest forward plan
- Latest Executive Board minutes

- 2.2 The Council Business Plan and Priorities relevant to this Board will be made available prior to the meeting for the Board's information.

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

- 2.4 At the July meeting the Leader of Council will be in attendance to discuss his portfolio. This discussion may identify other areas for Scrutiny.

3.0 Work programming guidance

- 3.1 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

- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 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"

- 3.4 In deciding areas for Scrutiny the Board shall determine how the proposed inquiry meets criteria approved from time to time by the Scrutiny Advisor Group (Attached as Appendix 2) and whether the programme can be adequately resourced and timetabled.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are requested to confirm areas for Scrutiny and authorise the Chair, in conjunction with officers, to draw up Inquiry Terms of Reference for subsequent approval by the Scrutiny Board.

Background Papers

KPMG Report 2007