

Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)

Date: 12th September 2011

Subject: Work Schedule

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. A draft work schedule is attached as appendix 1. The work schedule has been provisionally completed pending on going discussions with the Board. The work schedule will be subject to change throughout the municipal year.
2. Also attached as appendix 2 and 3 respectively are the minutes of Executive Board 27th July 2011 and the Council's current Forward Plan relating to this Board's portfolio.
3. In July, the Board identified a number of areas of review to be undertaken this municipal year. Working group meetings were held during August to discuss the potential scope of such work. All Members of the Board were invited to attend these meetings. As a result, draft terms of reference have been prepared in relation to the Board's forthcoming inquiries into Private Rented Sector Housing and Fuel Poverty.
4. A working group of the Board also met with senior officers and the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Regeneration to discuss the role of Scrutiny in relation to the forthcoming Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reforms, as set out within the Localism Bill. Such reforms will abolish the current HRA subsidy system from April 2012, putting Councils' in control of their housing assets. In doing so, it is recognised that the Council will need to adopt a new approach to HRA business planning that is influenced by investment need, underpinned by risk analysis and integrated with funding solutions that are prudent, robust and sustainable. In anticipation of a new draft HRA Business Plan being approved by the

Executive Board in November 2011, the Scrutiny Board will have the opportunity to consider and comment on the draft Plan to ensure that it reflects the Council's priorities in terms of housing investment needs. Further working group meetings will be held during September with a view to the Board reporting its final views on the draft HRA Business Plan in October prior to the Executive Board meeting in November. This is reflected in the Board's work schedule.

Recommendations

5. Members are asked to:
 - a) Consider the draft work schedule and make amendments as appropriate.
 - b) Note the Executive Board minutes and Forward Plan

Background documents

6. None used