



Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board

Date: 18th June 2012

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. 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 Director(s), Executive Board Member(s) and Partnership Chair, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider and confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

Recommendation

3. Members are requested to use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to:
 - (i) confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year
 - (ii) authorise the Chair, in conjunction with officers, to draw up inquiry terms of reference for subsequent approval by the Scrutiny Board.

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.
- 2.2 The alignment of the Scrutiny Boards to the Strategic Partnership Boards continues to promote a more strategic and outward looking scrutiny function that focuses on the City Priorities, as set out within the City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015.
- 2.3 The City Priority Plan was established to replace the Leeds Strategic Plan. This city-wide partnership plan summarises the key outcomes and priorities to be delivered by the Council, and its partners, over the next 4 years. As such they are the "must-do" priorities or "obsessions" for each partnership and may be supported by more detailed action plans as the partnerships sees fit.

3.0 Main issues

Alignment with the Strategic Partnership Boards

- 3.1 As set out within its terms of reference, this Scrutiny Board is authorised to review or scrutinise the performance of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. In doing so, the Scrutiny Board will review outcomes, targets and priorities within the Business Plan and "Best City...for communities" priorities, as set out within the City Priority Plan. These priorities are as follows:
 - Reduce crime levels and their impact across Leeds
 - Effectively tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in our communities
 - Ensure that local neighbourhoods are clean
 - Increase a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Board will also act as 'critical friend' to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. In line with this approach, the Scrutiny Board will assess how well the Partnership is working in practice, with particular focus on how well it has increased the pace of change in relation to a specific priority area and also more generally in terms of tackling poverty and addressing inequality within Leeds.
- 3.3 In determining items of scrutiny work this year, the Scrutiny Board is also encouraged to explore how it can add value to the work of the Partnership in delivering on the city priorities.
- 3.4 To assist the Scrutiny Board, a copy of the terms of reference of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board is attached (Appendix 1). Also attached is a briefing paper setting out the structure of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and highlighting the priorities and planned areas of work for 2012 (Appendix 2).

Other sources of Scrutiny work

- 3.5 As well as the focus on partnership scrutiny, Scrutiny Boards have and will continue to challenge service directorates. The Scrutiny Boards' terms of reference are determined by reference to Directors' delegations.
- 3.6 The Scrutiny Board may therefore undertake pieces of scrutiny work in line with its terms of reference, as considered appropriate. Such pieces of work may arise from the Scrutiny Board's performance monitoring role. However, other common sources include requests for scrutiny and other corporate referrals.
- 3.7 In its capacity as a 'Crime and Disorder Committee', this particular Scrutiny Board will also be required to consider any referrals made by elected members to review or scrutinise local crime and disorder matters. The Board also has powers to review or scrutinise decisions made (or action taken), in connection with the discharge by the 'responsible authorities' of their crime and disorder functions. Further details are set out within the joint protocol between Scrutiny and the local Community Safety Partnership.

Areas of Scrutiny work brought forward from the previous year

- 3.8 At its meeting on 3rd April 2012, the former Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board considered an update report on the impact and progress made by the new multi-agency Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT). In doing so, the Board acknowledged the request made by the Executive Board for Scrutiny to examine the integration of the Noise Service in the new municipal year and find a better solution for people experiencing domestic noise nuisance. The Executive Board also requested that Scrutiny continues to monitor the work of the LASBT and seeks assurance that the handling of anti-social behaviour has been consistently achieved across the city. The Scrutiny Board recommended that such issues be taken forward by its successor Board in 2012/13.

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 Director(s) and Executive Board Member(s) holding the relevant portfolios and also the Partnership Chair.
- 4.1.2 The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods; the Executive Board Member for Environment; and the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services (also Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board) have been invited to attend today's meeting to discuss potential areas of scrutiny work this year.
- 4.1.3 Also attached for Members consideration are the latest Executive Board minutes (Appendix 3) and the Council's current Forward Plan relating to this Board's portfolio (Appendix 4).

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.

4.2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules now 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 City Priorities

4.3.1 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a more strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the City Priorities. As set out in paragraph 3.1 above, this particular Scrutiny Board is authorised to review or scrutinise the performance of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. In doing so, the Scrutiny Board will review outcomes, targets and priorities within the Business Plan and "Best City....for communities" priorities, as set out within the City Priority Plan.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 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 2009 on the Scrutiny function in Leeds.

4.4.2 Before deciding to undertake an inquiry, the Scrutiny Board is advised to consider the current workload of the Scrutiny Board and the available resources to carry out the work.

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 Director(s), Executive Board Member(s) and Partnership Chair, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider and confirm the 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:

- (i) confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year

- (ii) authorise the Chair, in conjunction with officers, to draw up inquiry terms of reference for subsequent approval by the Scrutiny Board.

7.0 Background papers¹

- City Priority Plan 2011 – 2015

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.