

**Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development**

**Report to Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> 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 Housing and Regeneration 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 four year priorities are as follows:
  - Maximise regeneration investment to increase housing choice and affordability within sustainable neighbourhoods
  - Enable growth of the city whilst protecting the distinctive green character of the city
  - Improve housing conditions and energy efficiency
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Board will also act as 'critical friend' to the Leeds Housing and Regeneration 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 briefing paper is attached as Appendix 1 which provides information on the Leeds Housing and Regeneration Board (Leeds Initiative) under the following headings:

- Terms of reference of the Leeds Housing and Regeneration Board
- Membership of the Leeds Housing and Regeneration Board
- Minutes of their meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> September and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012
- Action Plan/Work Programme

#### 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.

### **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 Directors of Environment and Neighbourhoods and City Development and the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services 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 2) and the Council's current Forward Plan relating to this Board's portfolio (Appendix 3).

#### **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 Leeds Housing and Regeneration 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 papers<sup>1</sup>**

- City Priority Plan 2011 – 2015

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<sup>1</sup> 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.