

## Work Schedule

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### **What is this report about?**

**Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions**

- All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year. In doing so, the work schedule should not be considered a fixed and rigid schedule, it should be recognised as a document that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.
- The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules also 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'.
- The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is attached to this report for the Board's consideration.

### **Recommendations**

Members are requested to consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year and therefore the latest iteration of the Board's work schedule for the remainder of the municipal year is attached as Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.
2. During the Board's consultative meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021, Members discussed possible areas of work for the Board to undertake this year, as set out within the note of that meeting. The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is therefore reflective of the Board's discussion held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
3. The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021 are also attached as Appendix 2. The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and note the Executive Board minutes, insofar as they relate to the remit of the Scrutiny Board; and consider any matter where specific scrutiny activity may also be warranted.

### Developing the work schedule

4. When considering any developments and/or modifications to the work schedule, effort should be undertaken to:
  - Avoid unnecessary duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue.
  - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.
  - Avoid pure "information items" except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review.
  - Seek advice about available resources and relevant timings, taking into consideration the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and the type of Scrutiny taking place.
  - Build in sufficient flexibility to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.
5. In addition, in order to deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to take a flexible approach and undertake activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits, where necessary and appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

### Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

#### *Additional meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021*

6. In accordance with the agreed approach linked to the school organisation proposals and objections procedure, the Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board was advised of formal objections received in relation to the proposal to expand St Edward's Catholic Primary School to permanently increase the number of places offered at the school in Reception from 20 to 30 places from September 2022.
7. After consulting the views of other Board Members, it was agreed that the Children and Families Scrutiny Board would hold an additional meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to consider the proposal, including the formal objections, in more detail.
8. In addition, the Board also agreed to utilise this formal public meeting to approve the appointment of non-voting co-opted members onto the Scrutiny Board and also consider and approve the Board's inquiry report on tackling the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on children and families.

*Consideration of the findings from a recent Ofsted focused visit to Leeds Children's Services*

9. Following the publication of a letter from Ofsted (dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021) to the Director of Children and Families summarising the findings of a focused visit to Leeds children's services on 20 and 21 July 2021, the Chair requested to utilise the Scrutiny Board's meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to discuss the reported findings with the Director of Children and Families and the Executive Board Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships, as well as considering what next steps the Scrutiny Board may wish to take. This matter is therefore being considered as part of the agenda for today's meeting.

**What impact will this proposal have?**

**Wards affected: All**

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

10. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year.

**What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

11. The Vision for Scrutiny also states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources prior to agreeing items of work.

**What are the resource implications?**

12. Experience has shown that the Scrutiny 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.
13. The Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by full Council also recognises that like all other Council functions, resources to support the Scrutiny function are under considerable pressure and that requests from Scrutiny Boards cannot always be met.
14. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:
- Seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director and Executive Member about available resources;
  - Avoid duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue;
  - Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.

**What are the legal implications?**

15. This report has no specific legal implications.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

16. There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

### **Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth       Health and Wellbeing       Climate Emergency

17. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the best council objectives.

### **Appendices**

18. Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board for the 2021/22 municipal year.
19. Appendix 2 – Draft minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

### **Background papers**

20. None.