

Work Programme

Date: 27 March 2024

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

Brief summary

- All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year. In doing so, the work programme should not be considered as fixed and rigid, 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, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme.’
- Reflecting on the information in this report, members are requested to consider and discuss the Board’s work programme for this municipal year.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) Consider the Board’s work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

What is this report about?

1. A draft work programme for the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the document are known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, as well as other areas of work identified by the Board over the course of the municipal year.
2. The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 13 March 2024 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.
3. Members will note some adjustments to the work programme since the last meeting in February. Today's meeting now has a further item on the Impact of asylum changes on children in Leeds, which is a follow up on a report considered in September 2023 on the same subject and reflects the Board's ongoing interest in this area.
4. As agreed at the February meeting the Draft Youth Justice Plan 2024/25, which falls under the Council's budget and policy framework and therefore is required to come to Scrutiny, has been re-scheduled to the April meeting to take account of a Joint Targeted Area Inspection which impacted the officers who draft the report.
5. Following past discussion work is underway to consider the allocation of one of the Board's co-opted member places to an individual representing the voice of children and families accessing SEND support and Alternative Provision in the city along with a wider review of co-opted positions on the Board linked to discussion in February which included the possibility of having the voice of children and young people specifically represented on the Board. This will require a more detailed report to be brought back setting out the options available and noting any comments received from stakeholders, an item is now programmed in for the April board meeting.

What impact will this proposal have?

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

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

7. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

8. To enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to maintain dialogue with the Directors and Executive Board Members holding the relevant portfolios. 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?

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 key risks and how are they being managed?

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

What are the legal implications?

13. This report has no specific legal implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft work programme of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- Appendix 2 – Minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 13 March 2024.

Background papers

- None