

Work Schedule

Date: 2 March 2023

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

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 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'.
- With this in mind, members are asked to note the proposed dates for 2023/24 for the successor Scrutiny Board and an initial draft work programme.
- A statement summarising the Scrutiny Board's recommendations and conclusions in relation to Reducing Gambling Harm is also appended to this report. The Board is asked to approve the submission of the Statement to the Executive Member for consideration.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) Note the successor Scrutiny Board's draft work schedule for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- b) Consider the appended statement on Reducing Gambling Harm and approve the submission of the final document to the Executive Member.

What is this report about?

1. A draft work schedule for the successor Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the work schedule are known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, identified Budget and Policy Framework items and recommendation tracking.
2. The Executive Board minutes from the meetings held on 8 February 2023 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 should also note the following dates for Board meetings in 2023/24, these are preliminary at this stage subject to confirmation at the Annual Council Meeting in May:

Month	Date	Public Meeting	Pre-Meeting for Board Members
June	22 June 2023	10.30am	10.00am
July	20 July 2023	10.30am	10.00am
August	No public meeting		
September	14 September 2023	10.30am	10.00am
October	12 October 2023	10.30am	10.00am
November	No public meeting		
December	7 December 2023	10.30am	10.00am
January	25 January 2024	10.30am	10.00am
February	22 February 2024	10.30am	10.00am
March	21 March 2024	10.30am	10.00am

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

6. The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) held a remote, consultative working group on 20 January 2023 to consider the local approach to reducing gambling harm. A summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Board is appended to this

item of business for consideration by Members (appendix 3). Members are asked to agree the submission of the final version of the statement to the Executive Board.

What impact will this proposal have?

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

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

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

8. 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

9. 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?

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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?

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

What are the legal implications?

14. This report has no specific legal implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board for the 2023/24 municipal year. Please note that dates are subject to confirmation at the Annual General Meeting in May.
- Appendix 2 – Minutes of the Executive Board meeting on 8 February 2023.
- Appendix 3 – Statement on Reducing Gambling Harm

Background papers

- None.