

Work Programme

Date: 25 March 2024

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The report sets out the draft 2023/24 work programme for the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) and reflects initial views from Board members at the June 2023 Board meeting and through subsequent consideration of work programme reports at each public meeting.

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 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.

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.'

Members will be invited to review and discuss the work programme at each public Scrutiny Board meeting that takes place during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- b) note the draft meeting dates for 2024/25
- c) agree the items to be recommended to the successor board in the 2024/25 municipal year

What is this report about?

- 1 A draft work programme for the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the programme are known items of scrutiny activity, including performance and budget monitoring and identified Budget and Policy Framework items.
- 2 Under the Sources of Work agenda item considered at the 19 June 2023 meeting of the Board initial views on work programming were put forward by Board Members, Executive Board Members and comments were also heard from senior officers. In addition, discussion at subsequent Board meetings under this item are reflected in Appendix 1.
- 3 The latest available Executive Board minutes from the meetings held on 7 February 2024 are provide at Appendix 2 to enable Board Members to highlight any items for future consideration by the Board. The minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 13 March 2024 were unfortunately not available at the time of publication of these papers.
- 4 Some adjustments have been made to the Work Programme that impact today's meeting agenda. The Digital Strategy Update item will now be delayed to the 2024/25 municipal year and its place an item following up on the Board's work on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has been programmed in. This item provides a scrutiny statement for board consideration and approval on the work that has been done on EDI and reflecting past consideration of these issues dating back to the 2020/21 municipal year.
- 5 As highlighted at the Board meeting in February a number of items remain of interest to the Board and it is proposed that those that are not considered as part of today's agenda are recommended to the successor board for consideration in 2024/25. These items are as follows:
 - Digital Strategy Update
 - Employee Mental Health and Well Being Update
 - EDI & Consultation
 - Election Update
- 6 This is the final time the work programme will be considered in the 2023/34 municipal year and reflects the work carried out by the Board in the municipal year. In consultation with the Chair the following draft meeting dates have been agreed for the 2024/25 municipal year for board members consideration:
 - Monday 17 June at 10.30AM
 - Monday 22 July at 10.30AM
 - No Meeting in August
 - Monday 16th September at 10.30AM
 - Monday 14th October at 10.30AM
 - No Meeting in November
 - Monday 9 December at 10.30AM
 - Monday 13 January at 10.30AM
 - Monday 17 February at 10.30AM
 - Monday 17 March at 10.30AM
- 7 There will be a pre-meeting scheduled for 10.00AM to support these meeting dates.

- 8 The planned site visit to the Council's Contact Centre unfortunately had to be cancelled due to technical issues impacting the office where the service is based. This will be rescheduled for a later date which will be communicated to members once it is available, or consideration will be given to a visit in the new municipal year to follow up on the positive item that the Board considered on the Contact Centre in December 2023.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 9 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

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

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 11 To enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to establish and maintain an effective, early dialogue with relevant Directors, senior officers and Executive Board Members.
- 12 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.
- 13 The Board's Work Programme is the subject of consultation with Board members at each public meeting and is subject to input from relevant Directors, senior officers and Executive Board Members both early in the municipal year and on an ongoing basis.

What are the resource implications?

- 14 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.
- 15 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.
- 16 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?

17 This report has no specific risk management implications.

What are the legal implications?

18 This report has no specific legal implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Draft work programme 2023/24
- Appendix 2: Minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 7 February 2024

Background papers

- None