

Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Date: 26th June 2017

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. The Vision for Scrutiny¹, attached at Appendix 1, 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. Consequently, when establishing their work programmes Scrutiny Boards should:
 - 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 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;
 - Balanced in terms of the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and as to the type of Scrutiny taking place;

¹ This forms part of Article 6 within the Council Constitution.

- Sufficiently flexible to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.
3. 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 Directors and Executive Board Members, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider priority areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

Recommendations

4. Members are requested to;
- Use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to draw up a list of areas for Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.
 - Request that the Chair and the Principal Scrutiny Officer consult with the relevant Director and Executive Board Members regarding resources in line with the agreed Vision for Scrutiny and report back to the next meeting with a more detailed work programme.

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.

3.0 Main issues

Best Council Plan

- 3.1 A refresh of the Best Council Plan was agreed by Council in February 2017 to reflect the significant changes to the context in which the council is working. The resulting 'Best Council Plan – Summary' is attached as Appendix 2.

Areas of Scrutiny work identified last year that now fall within the remit of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

- 3.2 Last year, the former Environment and Housing and Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Boards identified the following areas for further consideration during 2017/18:

- *Improving Air Quality in Leeds*
The Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board carried out an inquiry into air quality last year and published its findings in May 2017 ([Link to scrutiny report](#)). In view of the complexities surround this matter and the need to respond appropriately to evolving national policies associated with air quality, the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board strongly advised that there is on-going scrutiny involvement in this area of work by the successor Scrutiny Board.
- *Roll out of Community Hubs*
Last year the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board tracked the recommendations arising from its earlier inquiry into the development of Community Hubs. Linked to this, the Board maintained a commitment to monitor overall progress in rolling out the Community Hub programme. In April 2017, the Board was consulted on the key principles associated with the Phase 3 roll out prior to wider consultation.
- *Future provision of CCTV*
The Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board engaged in early dialogue with the then-Director of Environment and Housing around opportunities to further develop and modernise the current CCTV service as well as exploit opportunities to generate new income activity. The Scrutiny Board expressed a wish to maintain a watching brief of progress surrounding the procurement of a new contract by April 2018.

- *Migration in Leeds, including potential issues associated with Brexit*
 Stemming from the work undertaken last year on Migration, the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board monitored the progress made in implementing its earlier recommendations as well as engaging in early discussions with cross-directorate representation on the issues that need to be considered in the context of migration in light of Brexit and its potential impact on Leeds. The Board expressed a wish to maintain a watching briefing on this matter.
- *The impact of Welfare Reforms*
 Stemming from the early Scrutiny work around Universal Credit, the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board received regular briefings and engaged in discussions with both internal and external representatives (including DWP and ATOS) regarding the impact of the government welfare reform programme on the residents of Leeds. It was agreed that the views and concerns raised by Scrutiny on this matter would be reflected in letter to the Chair of the Work and Pensions Parliamentary Select Committee along with a formal request for more detailed scrutiny at a national level. The Board also expressed a wish to maintain a watching brief on this matter.
- *Review of Housing Advisory Panels*
 Stemming from its recent review of wider tenant involvement groups, the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board stressed the importance of ensuring that the Council's forthcoming review of Housing Advisory Panels also includes the views of Scrutiny.
- *Refuse collection rerouting*
 The Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board was pleased to note the involvement of frontline staff to help inform proposed changes to routes and stressed the importance of engaging effectively with Elected Members too. However, the Board also expressed a wish to keep a watching brief on the implementation of the proposed changes.
- *Peckfield Landfill Site and the broader regulatory issues*
 The Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board produced a position statement following its on-going monitoring of the recommendations arising from an earlier inquiry into Peckfield Landfill Site ([link to scrutiny position statement](#)). Within this, the Board reflects on its broader views surrounding the current legislative and regulatory framework associated with landfill sites and urges the Council to engage with Scrutiny in providing a response to planned consultations this year by the Environment Agency and Defra on related matters.
- *Private Rented Sector Housing*
 The Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board identified Private Rented Sector Housing as a key area of interest last year and received a detailed report on this matter during its April 2017 meeting. However, the Board felt that this area of work would also warrant further Scrutiny during the 2017/18 municipal year.

3.3 As the above areas now fall within the remit of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board, the Board is asked to consider whether or not to include these within its work programme.

Other sources of Scrutiny work

- 3.4 The Scrutiny Boards' terms of reference are also determined by reference to Directors' delegations. As such, Scrutiny Boards have always challenged service directorates across the full range of council activities and the Scrutiny Board may therefore undertake pieces of scrutiny work in line with its terms of reference, as considered appropriate.
- 3.5 Other common sources of work include pre-decision scrutiny, requests for scrutiny and other corporate referrals. The Board is also required to be formally consulted during the development of key policies which form part of the council's budget and policy framework.

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 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.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.

- 4.2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules 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 the Best Council Plan

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

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 4.4.1 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.
- 4.4.2 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. 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.

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 Directors, Executive Board Members and Scrutiny Officer, the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider 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 draw up a list of areas for Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.
- Request that the Chair and the Principal Scrutiny Officer consult with the relevant Director and Executive Board Members regarding resources in line with the agreed Vision for Scrutiny and report back to the next meeting with a more detailed work programme.

7.0 Background papers²

7.1 None

² The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.