



Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 18 January 2018

Subject: Work Schedule – January 2018

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

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

2 Main issues

- 2.1 At its initial meeting in June 2017, the Scrutiny Board discussed a range of matters for possible inclusion within the overall work schedule for 2017/18. The areas discussed included a range of matters which were then used to help formulate an outline work schedule.
- 2.2 The latest iteration of the work schedule is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board – subject to any identified and agreed amendments.

Developing the work schedule

- 2.3 The work schedule should not be considered to be a fixed and rigid schedule, it should be recognised as something 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.
- 2.4 However, 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

2.5 In addition, in order to deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to take a flexible approach and undertaken activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits, where deemed appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

Service area performance

2.6 The work schedule reflects the Board’s discussion about monitoring specific service areas. Any updated proposals will be reported to the Scrutiny Board.

Business Rates Inquiry

2.7 At the beginning of the municipal year, the Scrutiny Board identified ‘Business Rates’ as a specific inquiry topic. The Scrutiny Board has considered a range of information to date.

2.8 As part of the inquiry, members of the Scrutiny Board to attended and observed a Valuation Tribunal Hearing on 12 December 2017.

2.9 At its meeting on 21 December 2017, the Scrutiny Board agreed meet with representatives of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), in order to better understand the role of the VOA and consider any associated matters relevant to the collection of Business Rates. This meeting is due to take place on 22 January 2018. Preparations for this meeting are detailed elsewhere on the agenda.

2.10 Recently it emerged that in September 2017, Government invited applications from local authorities to pilot 100% Business Rates Retention in 2018/19. As set out in the report to Executive Board in December 2017, this represents an expansion of the existing 100% pilot programme and is intended to help Government and the local government sector to explore options for the design of future increased business rate retention.

2.11 It was also reported that the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool had submitted an application to pilot 100% retention; with any additional growth being retained regionally if the Pool’s application succeeded. Additional growth was estimated to be in excess of £30m.

2.12 In late December 2017, it was confirmed the application to pilot 100% retention had been successful. The terms and implications of the pilot arrangements are likely to be of interest to the Scrutiny Board as part of its inquiry.

2.13 It also remains the intention to request a meeting with the relevant / responsible government minister. Details of this meeting remain to be finalised.

Apprenticeships Levy

- 2.14 At the Scrutiny Board meeting in October 2017, members of the Scrutiny Board agreed that arrangements should be made for a working group meeting in early 2018 to review progress against the identified 'inquiry points' set out in the apprenticeship levy paper.
- 2.15 At its previous meeting in December 2017, the Scrutiny Board agreed to arrange a working group meeting in late February 2018, once the outcome of the Council's bid to the Education and Skills Funding Agency to become an Employer Provider is known. Specific details remain to be finalised.

Outcome of discussions at the meeting

- 2.16 Details of any specific outcomes from the meeting may need to be considered and reflected in an updated work schedule, including any longer-term consideration of future budget developments or proposals.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the matters outlined in this report and agree (or amend) the overall work schedule (as presented at Appendix 1) as the basis for the Board's work for the remainder of 2017/18.

4. Background papers¹

- 4.1 None used

¹ 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.