



**Report of Head of Democratic Services**

**Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

**Subject: Work Schedule**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open 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. Background information**

- 2.1 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 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.

**3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board – subject to any identified and agreed amendments.
- 3.2 Traditional items of Scrutiny work have been incorporated into the work schedule, which involve recommendation tracking of work previously undertaken by the Children and Families Scrutiny Board; performance monitoring reports and any Budget and Policy Framework items.

- 3.3 Executive Board minutes from the meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and 4<sup>th</sup> September 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 identify any matter where specific scrutiny activity may be warranted, and therefore subsequently incorporated into the work schedule.

#### Developing the work schedule

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 deemed appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

#### Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

##### *Scrutiny Inquiry – Is Leeds a Child Friendly City? – Final report*

- 3.6 At its July meeting, the Board made a number of suggested amendments to its draft report which summarised the findings and recommendations of its Inquiry ‘Is Leeds a Child Friendly City?’ The Board’s report was finalised and published in August ([Link to report](#))

##### *Post 16 Meadow Park Partnership*

- 3.7 Since the Scrutiny Board’s last meeting, it has been brought to the attention of the Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board that a decision has been made by the North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) and Benton Park High School to cease the Post-16 Meadows Park partnership arrangement. This was brought to the attention of the Chair by a member of the public acting on behalf of some of the affected families to relay their concerns regarding this decision and the level of consultation undertaken with the families and young people affected by the decision.
- 3.8 At the request of the Chair, the Director of Children and Families is providing a verbal briefing at today’s meeting on the Council’s understanding and position in relation to the decision to cease the Post-16 Meadows Park partnership arrangement. The Board then be asked to determine what, if any, further Scrutiny action it may wish to undertake.

## *Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman report*

- 3.9 Since the Scrutiny Board's last meeting, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman made a finding of maladministration with injustice in a complaint and issued a public report against the authority. At the request of the Chair, details of the Ombudsman's report and the Council's response to its findings have been shared with the Children and Families Scrutiny Board as part of today's meeting.

### **4. Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 The Vision for Scrutiny states that Scrutiny Boards should seek the advice of the Scrutiny officer, the relevant Director(s) and Executive Member(s) 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.

#### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 When considering areas of work, the Board is reminded that influencing climate change and sustainability now forms part of the Child Friendly Leeds portfolio area.

### **4.4 Resources, procurement 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 This report has no specific risk management implications.

## **5. Conclusions**

5.1 All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year. The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board – subject to any identified and agreed amendments.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 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 2019/20.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.