

Report of Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Date: 17 October 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 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.

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 Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 18 September 2019 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.

- 3.3 At the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board meeting on 12 September, it was agreed that a working group would meet to allow more time for members to discuss the Parks and Green Spaces Consultation to 2030. An invitation was extended to all Board members and the working group met on 30 September. A summary of the main observations and recommendations from the working group are attached as Appendix 3.

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 necessary and appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

Referral to Scrutiny

- 3.6 A request for scrutiny has been received in the name of Cllr Wadsworth. This is attached to the Board’s agenda as Item 10.
- 3.7 If required, the Board is asked to amend its work programme in order to reflect its response to the referral to the Scrutiny Board.

Priority Neighbourhoods

- 3.8 In order to better reflect anticipated progress in relation to Priority Neighbourhoods, this item has been removed from the work programme for November and re-scheduled for consideration by the Board in the New Year.

Additional Meeting

- 3.9 Work is ongoing in relation to two items that were originally scheduled for discussion by the Board in October and November - ‘Energy Efficiency in Council Housing Stock’ and a Fuel Poverty Update. It is therefore recommended that the Board considers these items in the new year.

3.10 Given the existing programme of work for the remaining meetings of the municipal year members may wish to consider scheduling an additional meeting in February to discuss these papers.

3.11 Should the Board wish to go ahead with an additional meeting, it could be accommodated in rooms 6&7 on **Thursday 6 February 10.30am – 12.30pm** (Board members to attend a pre-meet 10am), which also currently avoids other corporate meetings members may have committed to attend.

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 should be a key area of focus.

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.

6.2 As part of that consideration members are asked to specifically confirm:

- Support for the scheduling of an additional meeting for 6 February 2020.
- The Board's response to Cllr Wadsworth request for scrutiny.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None.

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.