

Work Programme

Date: 20 September 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- 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.
- 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 and Diversity Scheme'.
- Reflecting on the information in this report and information presented as part of other agenda items at today's meeting, Members are requested to consider and discuss the Board's work programme for this municipal year.

Recommendations

Members are requested to consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. A draft work schedule for the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the work schedule are known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, identified Budget and Policy Framework items and recommendation tracking items.
2. The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 21 July 2021 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 consider any matter where specific scrutiny activity may also be warranted.

Changes to the Work Programme since the last meeting

3. As the work of the Board evolves changes to the work programme become necessary to prioritise and fit agenda items in at appropriate times. Since the July meeting some adjustments have taken place. The update item on electoral services is on today's meeting agenda as opposed to October as originally planned and the Annual Corporate Risk Management Report will now feature in October these two items have effectively swapped to address scheduling issues. In a further change the planned inquiry work on Customer Contact has moved from the September cycle to November. Following discussions with the service it has been decided that the November cycle will enable a fuller story to be told linked to planned improvements and ongoing changes in the service.
4. The October meeting now also features two new items which reflect feedback from board members at previous meetings. The first of these will be an agenda item on recycling in Leeds which links to planned work from the Environment, Housing and Communities Board on the same issue, commencing in September. The remit of Strategy and Resources involvement will be restricted to financial and resource matters and there will be close working between the two Boards on this piece of work. A further item for October will be focussed on the Year of Culture and the potential for it to support recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, this follows comments from Board members at the June meeting expressing an interest in this matter.
5. It is important to also note that several potential work streams are also in development reflecting the views of the Chair, the suggestions of the Board and recommendations from the predecessor Board. This includes a possible item on how the Council allocates its resources and receives income on a geographic basis in Leeds and a return to the work initiated at the July meeting on agency staffing at the Council.
6. In line with practice introduced last year that enhanced Scrutiny involvement in the annual budget setting process a Scrutiny Working Group will be established in October to look in more detail at budget proposals for the forthcoming financial year (2022/23) that fall within the remit of the Board. A date for this meeting will be provided as soon as possible and it is expected that this will be available, by way of verbal update, at the September meeting.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

7. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year. The items in Appendix 1 set out the current programme of the Board and sets a framework for its work in 2021/22.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

8. In order to enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that 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.

What are the resource implications?

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 legal implications?

12. This report has no specific legal implications.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

13. There are no risk management implications relevant to this report.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

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

Appendices

15. Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board for the 2021/22 municipal year.

16. Appendix 2 – Minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 21 July 2021.

Background papers

17. None.