

Work Schedule

Date: 25 November 2021

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities)

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 also information presented as part of other agenda items at today's meeting, Members are requested to consider and discuss the Board's work schedule for this municipal year.

Recommendations

- a) Members are requested to consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year.
- b) Members are asked to formally ratify the working group recommendation to endorse the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy subject to consideration being given to the comments from members at the working group

Why is the proposal being put forward?

1. A draft work schedule for the Environment, Housing & Communities 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.

2. The Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 20 October 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.
3. The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing & Communities) held a working group on 19 October as part of an ongoing consultation on the draft Parks and Greenspaces Strategy. Members were updated on changes that had been made to the draft in light of earlier comments from the Scrutiny Board in the initial stages of consultation, as well as feedback received during a subsequent public consultation.
4. A summary of the meeting is attached at **Appendix 3** for information. Members are asked to formally ratify the recommendation to endorse the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy subject to consideration being given to the comments from members at the working group.

Areas of work carried forward from the former Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board

5. At its final meeting of 2020/21 the former Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board consider a number of ongoing priorities that members recommended the successor board continue to scrutinise. These are reflected in the work programme at Appendix 1.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

6. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year.
7. The draft work schedule is reflective of the views of the former Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.

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 Environment, Housing & Communities Scrutiny Board for the 2021/22 municipal year.

16. Appendix 2 – Draft minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 20 October 2021.

17. Appendix 3 – Parks and Greenspaces Strategy Working Group Summary

Background papers

18. None.