

Work Programme

Date: 29 November 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 meetings held on 20 October and 17 November 2021 are also attached as Appendices 2 and 3. 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 October meeting some adjustments have taken place along with updates for Board members' information. At the October Board meeting board members were keen to ensure that there was sufficient time to get through the work programme and suggested a possible additional meeting in December. Following discussion with the Chair it has now been agreed to expand the planned Working Group on 13 December to enable initial consideration of the Contact Centre work item in addition to the planned consideration of the 2022/23 Budget proposals.
4. This will mean that the Contact Centre item can be subject to members inquiries at the Working Group before coming to a public meeting in February. This change has facilitated a report on Agency Staffing to come forward in November following an initial item in July that introduced the subject to members. Given the clear budgetary element to Agency staffing it was thought timely to have a further item at Scrutiny in advance the initial budget proposals that are scheduled to go to Executive Board in December.
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. In addition, consideration has been given to work on FOI/EIR requests in relation to performance and the processes used to deal with them at the Council and this item is now programmed for January.
6. The Board's September meeting also featured substantial discussion of Inclusivity within the council's workforce. This item is scheduled to return in January 2022 with an agenda item on Staff Inclusion to compliment the work already carried out on improving the experiences and outcomes of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues at Leeds City Council. Further reports on this important issue are possible at future meetings.
7. As noted above at paragraph 3, in line with practice introduced last year a Scrutiny Working Group has been established in December to look in more detail at budget proposals for the forthcoming financial year (2022/23) that fall within the remit of the Board. A suggested date for this meeting has now been agreed and an invitation sent to Board members for 13 December 2021 at 9.15AM which is earlier than initially reported to reflect the added item on the Contact Centre, budget 2022/23 matters will be discussed from 10.00AM.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

8. 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?

9. 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?

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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?

13. This report has no specific legal implications.

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

14. 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

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

Appendices

16. Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board for the 2021/22 municipal year.
17. Appendix 2 – Minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 20 October 2021.
18. Appendix 3 - Minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 17 November 2021.

Background papers

19. None.