

Work Programme

Date: 24 January 2022

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 15 December 2021 are also attached at 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 November meeting some adjustments have taken place along with updates for Board members' information. A Scrutiny Board Working Group has taken place on 13 December which considered both the Budget 2022/23 savings proposals and an item on the Contact Centre which has been on the work programme for some time, this was an initial discussion that will now be followed by a report to the public meeting of the Board in February.
4. Since the last meeting in November the Executive Board approved the new Best City Ambition at its meeting on 15 December 2021. This new approach will replace the Best Council Plan (BCP) and as was the case with the BCP the Best City Ambition will be included in the Budget and Policy Framework in accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. As a result, and as is required by the Budget and Policy Framework, it was also agreed that the Best Council Ambition proposals would be referred to Scrutiny for consideration and comment. This item will therefore come to the Board on this agenda in January.
5. In order to manage workloads at each meeting and to ensure agendas are not too large in terms of substantive items, a knock-on implication of considering the Best Council Ambition in January is that the planned item on Freedom of Information Requests will now come to the Board in February.
6. In addition, a further item on Year of Culture has been programmed in for March, following initial consideration of the issue at the October meeting. Also in March an item on Procurement is planned which builds on a similar report in March 2021 focussing on social value in procurement. The Social Value element will be retained as a key area of interest for the Board but there will also be a focus on value for money in procurement.
7. 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. Work is ongoing on this and clearer picture on when this could be expected will be available later in the municipal year. In addition, the suggestion that Devolution could feature on the Board's Work Programme or on the successor Board's Work Programme has also been noted and is part of agenda considerations in the coming months.
8. In a further change since the November meeting, it is also proposed that the Waste Inquiry will return to the Board in February for consideration of a summary of evidence item which will seek to capture the views of the Board from the October and November meetings.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

9. 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?

10. 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?

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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?

14. This report has no specific legal implications.

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

15. 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

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

Appendices

17. Appendix 1 – Draft work schedule of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board for the 2021/22 municipal year.
18. Appendix 2 – Minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 15 December 2021.

Background papers

19. None.