

Work Schedule

Date: 6th July 2022

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- 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'.
- The latest iteration of the Board's work schedule is attached to this report for the Board's consideration.

Recommendations

Members are requested to consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2022/23 municipal year.

What is this report about?

- 1 During the Scrutiny Board's initial meeting on 8th June 2022, Members were presented with a draft work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year which reflected known items of scrutiny activity, such as performance and budget monitoring, as well as other areas of work recommended by the former Scrutiny Board to be pursued in the 2022/23 municipal year.
- 2 In consideration of this, other key areas of interest were also raised, which included the following:
 - The refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan;
 - The implications of recommendations arising from the recently published national independent review of Children's Social Care by Josh MacAlister;
 - Recruitment and Retention of Teachers and Social Work Staff;
 - The Schools Bill 2022-23 and the impact on Leeds;
 - Review of Ofsted ratings of schools in the city;
 - The implications of proposals set out within the green paper on the future of the SEND and alternative provision system in England.
 - Exam results within the context of Covid impact and fairness;
 - A continued focus around Elective Home Education;
 - Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs of young people, with links to the My Health, My School survey and the Future In Mind Strategy;
 - Support provided to Ukrainian and Afghan refugee children and their families.
 - Young offenders and the support provided in tackling youth re-offending;
 - Review of extracurricular activities available outside of school;
 - The impacts of poverty on children and their families;
 - The provision and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans.
2. However, in recognition of the need to ensure that the work of the Scrutiny Board remains manageable, it was agreed that the Chair of the Scrutiny Board would liaise with the Principal Scrutiny Adviser and Director of Children and Families to consider which of the above areas of interest would best warrant an in-depth piece of scrutiny work; which are deemed less of a priority for this year; and which areas could potentially form part of the Board's discussions when already tracking progress against relevant key strategic plans.
3. An updated version of the Board's work schedule for the 2022/23 municipal year has now been appended for Members' consideration (set out in Appendix 1) and will be discussed in greater detail during today's meeting.
4. The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 22nd June 2022 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.

Developing the work schedule

5. 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.
6. 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.

What impact will this proposal have?

7. All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work schedule for the municipal year.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

8. The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:	
Have ward members been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

9. The Vision for Scrutiny 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 key risks and how are they being managed?

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

What are the legal implications?

14. This report has no specific legal implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Latest work schedule of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board for the 2022/23 municipal year.
- Appendix 2 – Draft minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 22nd June 2022.

Background papers

- None.