

Work Schedule

Date: 21st July 2022

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

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

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 23rd 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 Other key areas of interest were also raised, as reflected within the minutes of that meeting. 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 to consider how best to prioritise and incorporate these into the work schedule with a view to bringing an updated version to the Board's July meeting for further consideration.
3. An updated version of the Board's work schedule for the 2022/23 municipal year is therefore set out in Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.
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? Yes 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 Environment, Housing and Communities 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.