

Work Programme

Date: 18 September 2023

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The report sets out the draft 2023/24 work programme for the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) and reflecting initial views from Board members at the June and July Board meetings.

All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year. In doing so, the work programme 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.

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.'

Members will be invited to review and discuss the work programme at each public Scrutiny Board meeting that takes place during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Recommendations

- a) Members are requested to consider and discuss the Scrutiny Board's work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- b) Nominees have been requested for a Cross Scrutiny Working Group on the forthcoming Community Committee Review, therefore members are requested to consider providing two nominees from this Board to feature in the working group (more detail at paragraph 7).

What is this report about?

- 1 A draft work programme for the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board is presented at Appendix 1 for consideration and discussion. Reflected in the programme are known items of scrutiny activity, including performance and budget monitoring and identified Budget and Policy Framework items.
- 2 The latest Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 26 July 2023 are also provided 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.
- 3 Under the Sources of Work agenda item considered at the 19 June meeting of the Board initial views on work programming were put forward by Board Members, Executive Board Members and comments were also heard from senior officers. In addition, discussion at the July meeting under this item are also reflected in Appendix 1.
- 4 Board members may also note some slight adjustments to the timing of agenda items. The October meeting will now consider separate reports on Financial Health monitoring and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as opposed to one item covering both. It is hoped this will enable enhanced consideration of the financial challenge faced by the Council both in year (through Financial Health monitoring) and in the future (through the MTFS).
- 5 There have been other minor changes with the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge item now potentially featuring in December due to timing issues with the planned October item and similar changes to the Contact Centre item and Procurement which move to December and January respectively. The latter is to be considered by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in November.
- 6 Earlier meetings of the Board in this municipal year have discussed the possibility of an EDI Working Group for Board members. Discussion is ongoing on this and how it might link into the existing training programme being delivered to all members on EDI.
- 7 In June 2023, the Executive Board agreed to undertake a full review of community committees and an important element of that is engagement with all 99 elected members through a range of committees and consultation events. One part of that consultation process is the establishment of a cross scrutiny Member Working Group, chaired by the Executive Member for Communities, which is intended to support and guide the review process. It is proposed that the Member Working Group is made up of two representatives from each of the five Scrutiny Boards. Therefore, as noted in the recommendations to this report the Board is asked to consider two nominees for this working group.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 8 All Scrutiny Boards are required to determine and manage their own work programme for the municipal year.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

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

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 10 To enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, it is recognised that each Scrutiny Board needs to establish and maintain an effective, early dialogue with relevant Directors, senior officers and Executive Board Members.
- 11 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?

- 12 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.
- 13 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.
- 14 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?

- 15 This report has no specific risk management implications.

What are the legal implications?

- 16 This report has no specific legal implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Draft work programme 2023/24
- Appendix 2: Minutes of the Executive Board meeting on 26 July 2023.

Background papers

- None