



Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

Date: 24th June 2013

Subject: Sources of work for the Scrutiny Board

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Scrutiny Boards are responsible for ensuring that items of scrutiny work come from a strategic approach as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest.
2. This report provides information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference. In consultation with the relevant Director(s) and Executive Board Member(s), the Scrutiny Board is requested to consider and confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year.

Recommendation

3. Members are requested to use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to:
 - (i) confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year
 - (ii) Authorise the Chair, in conjunction with officers, to draw up inquiry terms of reference for subsequent approval by the Scrutiny Board.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To assist the Scrutiny Board in effectively managing its workload for the forthcoming municipal year, this report provides information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Scrutiny Boards are responsible for ensuring that items of scrutiny work come from a strategic approach as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest.

3.0 Main issues

Sources of Scrutiny work

- 3.1 The current Council Business Plan 2011 to 2015 was refreshed in 2012 to update targets but it was agreed that it would be more formally reviewed after two years. This review has now been undertaken, including consultation with this Scrutiny Board in April 2013.
- 3.2 It was recommended by this Scrutiny Board that Scrutiny Boards use the new Best Council Plan to determine areas for 'critical friend' review. The new Best Council Plan 2013-17 is due to be considered by the Executive Board on 19th June 2013 prior to its approval at Full Council. A copy is attached as appendix 1.
- 3.3 As well as the focus on the Best Council Plan, Scrutiny Boards have and will continue to challenge service directorates. The Scrutiny Boards' terms of reference are determined by reference to Directors' delegations.
- 3.4 The Scrutiny Board may therefore undertake pieces of scrutiny work in line with its terms of reference, as considered appropriate. Such pieces of work may arise from the Scrutiny Board's performance monitoring role. However, other common sources include requests for scrutiny and other corporate referrals.

Areas of Scrutiny work brought forward from the previous year

- 3.5 Last year, the Scrutiny Board provisionally identified a number of areas of work it would like to pursue. These were; Community Centre lettings, HR recruitment practices and Community Right to Challenge.
- 3.6 Following discussions with officers a number of suggested areas have been put forward. These include;
 - Preparations for, and impacts of Universal Credit
 - Integration of face-to-face services.

Utilising the Leeds Census as a valuable data source

- 3.7 The Census is a vital planning tool for both the public and private sectors and the data that is derived from it is an essential element in intelligence led decision making. Such data also helps to build a comprehensive picture of conditions in localities and helps identify the critical issues facing neighbourhoods.
- 3.8 The last Census took place on 27th March 2011. It was conducted on a resident basis and the statistics relate to where people usually live, rather than where they were on Census night. Students who were studying away from home during the terms were enumerated at their term-time address.
- 3.9 The “Leeds: The Big Picture” report provides a factual analysis of the data produced from the 2011 Census. It compares the data for Leeds to the averages for England and Wales and, where possible, includes comparisons to information from the 2011 Census. This report is available on the Leeds Observatory under the “Resources and Documents” section (<http://www.westyorkshireobservatory.org/Leeds>).
- 3.10 To complement the “Leeds: The Big Picture” report, an additional document has also been produced based on Census data published by the Office for National Statistics on 30th January 2013. The “2011 Census: Comparing the results across Leeds” document focusses on the comparisons between the ten Area Committees in Leeds, but also makes reference to the results by electoral ward and Lower Super Output Area to further demonstrate the extent of the differences across the city at the small area level. A copy of this report has therefore been provided to Board Members as a valuable data source. (Appendix 2)

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 It is recognised that in order to enable Scrutiny to focus on strategic areas of priority, each Scrutiny Board needs to establish an early dialogue with relevant Director(s) and Executive Board Member(s)

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.

- 4.2.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules now 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’.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Boards promote a more strategic and outward looking Scrutiny function that focuses on the City Priorities.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 4.4.1 Over the last few years of Scrutiny Board work, experience has shown that the 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.

4.4.2 Before deciding to undertake an inquiry, the Scrutiny Board is advised to consider the current workload of the Scrutiny Board and the available resources to carry out the work.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

4.6 Risk Management

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

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Scrutiny Boards are responsible for ensuring that items of scrutiny work come from a strategic approach as well as a need to challenge service performance and respond to issues of high public interest. This report provides information and guidance on potential sources of work and areas of priority within the Board's terms of reference.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Members are requested to use the attached information and the discussion with those present at the meeting to:

- (i) confirm the areas of Scrutiny for the forthcoming municipal year
- (ii) Authorise the Chair, in conjunction with officers, to draw up inquiry terms of reference for subsequent approval by the Scrutiny Board.

7.0 Background papers¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.