

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – 11 JANUARY 2017

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME – INTERIM UPDATE

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: GOVERNANCE, PROCUREMENT & COMMISSIONING

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY

To provide a progress update on delivery of the Scrutiny Work Programme to enable the Board to monitor performance and agree any actions arising and to consider the management of Scrutiny resources in 2017/18 and beyond.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) To note how the 2016/17 allocation of resources has been utilised to date;
- (b) To note the work programmes of each Scrutiny Committee and consider whether any re-allocation of resources or change to the work programme is required;
- (c) To approve the time table for work programming for 2017/18 and criteria for scrutiny;
- (d) To approve the initial allocation of resources for 2017/18; and
- (e) To approve the template for future scrutiny reports.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	No	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	Borough Wide
DELIVERY DATE	The 2016/17 work programme will be delivered by the end of the municipal year. A year end report will be presented to Scrutiny Management Board in May 2017, followed by the Annual Report to Full Council in July 2017.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	No	Scrutiny has a role in ensuring that local government is effective and accountable. This includes undertaking reviews and challenging and monitoring performance. The cost of supporting the Scrutiny role is included within the Democratic & Scrutiny Services budget in 2016/17 and the proposed budget for 2017/18. The financial implications of any recommendations made by Scrutiny should be considered as part of reports as relevant.

LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The Council is under a legal requirement to provide an Overview and Scrutiny function in accordance with the defined requirements of Sections 9F to 9FI in Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) and associated legislation.</p> <p>Government guidance states that Overview and Scrutiny Committees should have flexibility to determine most of their work plan and that the Council adopts mechanisms for coordinating that work.</p> <p>Locally the Council's Scrutiny Rules are published at pages 57 to 70 of the current version of the Council's Constitution and further details are contained in The Scrutiny Handbook</p> <p>KF 30.11.2016</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 The Scrutiny Management Board met on 20 July 2015 to consider the priorities for the 2016/17 work programme and agreed the following:

- All the suggestions received for the 2016/17 Scrutiny Work Programme were referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for prioritisation in each individual work programme;
- The Scrutiny Management Board will meet roughly quarterly and will continue its role in holding the executive to account;
- Each Scrutiny Committee received an allocation of up to six formal meetings for the 2016/17 municipal year; and
- Each Scrutiny Committee was requested to set an initial timetable of meetings for the 2016/17 municipal year with any remaining resources allocated flexibly by the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team Leader based on the requirements of individual scrutiny reviews.

2. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

2.1 Meetings

The table below summarises work to date expressed as the number of scrutiny meetings held compared to the allocated resource.

Committee	Formal committee meetings	Working group/other officer supported meetings	Total meetings to date	Further planned formal meetings to end of year	Total	Allocated resource
Scrutiny Management Board	3	0	3	1	4	4
Children & Young People	3	0	3	1	4	6
Customer, Community & Partnership	4	3	7	4	11	6
Finance & Enterprise*	1	0	1	4	5	6
Health & Adult Care	3	0	3	2	5	6
Joint HOSC**	3	4	7	2	9	N/A
Total	17	7	24	14	38	28

* Finance and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee invited Customer Community & Partnership Committee to engage with the review of Civil Parking Enforcement but for the purposes of avoiding double counting, these meetings have been allocated to Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee only.

** Due to the importance of the Future Fit programme and the specific resource provided for this work within the Democratic & Legal Services structure, this Committee was not allocated a specific resource limit. Administration for the meetings is rotated with counterparts at Shropshire Council.

2.2 2016/17 Work Programme

A copy of the Work Programme for each Scrutiny Committee is attached at **Appendix 1**.

2.3 Staff resources

2.3.1 Following the Democratic Services restructure in April 2016, the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Teams merged, creating twin-hat roles in common with many other local authorities and in response to the changing face of Local Government.

2.3.2 Prior to the restructure, dedicated scrutiny support of 1.7 FTE Officers was in place and this support has been retained at 1.5 FTE for a transitional period to allow knowledge transfer and dedicated support to the scrutiny of NHS Future Fit proposals.

2.3.3 From April 2017, Scrutiny support will be provided by 4 FTE officers who also have responsibilities for the Executive and Regulatory functions of the Council and other related tasks. High level Scrutiny support will be provided from the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team Leader and Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer with administrative support from two Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officers. This allows the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team Leader and Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer to focus the scrutiny element of their workload on research, negotiation, etc. In the longer term, it is anticipated that the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officers will additionally provide research and technical support for less complex scrutiny reviews.

3. REQUESTS FOR URGENT DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN

The Chair of the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee was informed of a decision regarding the £20m Growth Fund – Investing in Telford's Growth which had not been published with 28 days' notice on the Notice of Key Decisions. The Chair gave permission for this decision to be considered at Cabinet on 21 July 2016 in order for a variation to the original delegation made in November 2015 to be given to ensure that the ability to react to inward investment enquiries was not stunted.

4. PAPERLESS WORKING

In order to mirror the commitment of the Cabinet, the majority of Scrutiny Management Board Members have indicated that they are in a position to trial paperless working for meetings of this Board. The Customer, Community and Partnership Scrutiny Committee, including its co-optees, have also trialled using personal portable devices to access agendas and reports at meetings. As a result, Scrutiny Members have provided feedback on their experience, which included a requirement for more training in how to use the equipment and software and this has been fed back to ICT and the Member Development Steering Group.

5. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

No scrutiny-specific member development training has taken place this municipal year but the Member Development Steering Group is considering a programme of development which includes Scrutiny Skills. Scrutiny Chairs have been consulted on the content of suggested sessions.

6. REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SCRUTINY NETWORKS

Scrutiny in Telford & Wrekin continues to engage with the Regional Health Scrutiny Network, West Midlands Scrutiny Network, the County and Unitary Officers Meeting and the CfPS Health Accountability Forum.

7. LOOKING FORWARD AND HOW SCRUTINY CAN CONTINUE TO ADD VALUE

- 7.1 Resource constraints do not mean that Scrutiny has to be less effective – but rather that it needs to take stock and evolve in order to ensure that resources are channelled in such a way as to achieve the greatest value to the Council from its activities. This means not only making the most of the resources available to Scrutiny from the Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team but being reasonable about the pressures placed on the Senior Management Team (SMT) to provide information and support from within the services under review.

Work programming

- 7.2.1 The previously agreed cessation of rolling work programmes will enable focussed and current work programmes to be devised. This change also produces the benefit of being able to begin the work programming process earlier in the municipal year in February or March each year. This would mean that the work programme would be ready for consideration by Scrutiny Management Board in late May/early June (after the Annual General Meeting) which would allow the Scrutiny Committees to start work in late June/early July and maximise the time available in each municipal year.
- 7.2.2 It is proposed that targeted work programming by Scrutiny Management Board at a meeting early in the municipal year will filter all suggestions received and will be as much about deciding what won't be reviewed and investigated as what will be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for further prioritisation. There should not be an expectation that every suggestion will be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committee to consider for its work programme and Scrutiny Management Board should rigorously apply the Criteria for Scrutiny to each suggestion before it is accepted for prioritisation. Each Scrutiny Committee should then prioritise its own workload and, again, there should be no expectation that every suggestion referred by Scrutiny Management Board will be considered during the course of the year. It will be essential for each Scrutiny Committee to identify the preferred method of scrutiny for each topic at an early stage so that resources can be appropriately managed.
- 7.2.3 A suggested timeline for work programming is attached at **Appendix 2** together with the current Criteria for Scrutiny.

Allocation of Resources and Methods of Scrutiny

- 7.2.4 Traditionally, the allocation of Scrutiny resources has fallen to Scrutiny Management Board. For the 2017/18 municipal year, in order to limit the resource intensive arrangements resulting from ad-hoc and short notice meetings, each Scrutiny Committee (and also the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee) has been included in the annual calendaring process with an initial allocation of meetings equal to quarterly meetings. The Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team Leader is currently authorised to

allocate any resource requirements required over and above allocations agreed by Scrutiny Management Board based on the requirements of individual scrutiny reviews or urgency and taking into account the implications on the wider workload of the Service. It is requested that this authorisation continues.

- 7.2.5 In recent years, the number of formal reports presented to Scrutiny meetings has reduced and often, a number of documents relating to an agenda item are attached to the agenda with a little explanatory text. This practice often means that the purpose of the meeting is not clear to those attending, and also requires presenting officers to spend time in the meeting outlining the purpose of the documents and giving an overview of the topic. It is suggested that from the 2017/18 municipal year, short summary reports could be provided giving a “five minute briefing” style summary of the issue, indicating why the Scrutiny Committee is considering the topic, what the main issues are, and what the expected outcome of the meeting is. This would limit verbal introductory presentations and allow the meeting to focus on evidence gathering. Following discussions with the Presenting Officer during the agenda setting process, the Chair would have discretion to accept a verbal presentation in lieu of a written report. A proposed template report is attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 7.2.6 At the conclusion of each Review, Scrutiny Committees should continue to consider if post-Review monitoring activity is necessary and, if so, how this should take place.

Dealing with Annual Reports from Other Bodies

- 7.2.7 Traditionally, Scrutiny receives Annual Reports from a variety of sources as set out in the following paragraphs. These are generally included on an agenda as a discussion point. However, these reports could potentially be used in a more satisfactory way by using the content to satisfy members about performance in particular areas or to highlight areas which may need monitoring or focus in forthcoming work programmes.
- (a) Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee is asked for comment on NHS Quality Accounts, often at short notice, which is facilitated via email between Committee Members. An alternative approach to Quality Accounts would be to decline to comment (except in exceptional circumstances) and simply receive them for noting via email and use the content to guide the work programming process.
 - (b) Annual Reports by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Adult Safeguarding Board are received by Health & Wellbeing Board and it is important that there is no duplication. Again, these reports could be disseminated to relevant Scrutiny Committee Members and used to guide the focus of the Work Programme in conjunction with any OfSted reports received.

- (c) The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership also provides an Annual Report for consideration. To date, only one report has been submitted with fairly limited content which has been circulated by email for noting.

8. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Scrutiny Management Board – 20 July 2016

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scrutiny Handbook

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