

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

25th July, 2017

Work Programme 2017/2018

1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 The Board is asked to consider its work programme for 2017/2018 and the establishment of any working groups as a vehicle to deliver the work programme.
- 1.2 Setting a work programme is an important stage in the scrutiny process. A well-planned work programme should focus on issues where scrutiny can add value, support the Council's 2030 Vision and enhance the services that the Council delivers.
- 1.3 Following a review of the Council's governance structure, at its meeting on 16 May, 2017 the Council established four scrutiny boards and a scrutiny management board - Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board - to deliver Sandwell's scrutiny function. The diagram at Appendix 1 sets out the structure. The Council appointed two vice-chairs to each scrutiny board, who will take the lead on a topic from within their respective Board's terms of reference, reporting back to the Board the findings of that work.
- 1.4 The Terms of Reference of this Board is attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.5 Officers from Democratic Services have been co-ordinating the gathering of suggested topics for the five scrutiny boards' work programmes for 2017/2018. This process has included:-
 - contacting all councillors seeking their suggestions;
 - contacting directors for suggestions;
 - seeking suggestions from staff via the Council's weekly communication email;
- 1.6 As well as reflecting the Council's 2030 Vision, work programmes should reflect local need and priorities. Scrutiny welcomes and values suggestions for its work programmes from the public. Suggestions were therefore also sought from the public via the Council's social

media platforms and newsletters. Around 60 suggestions were received.

- 1.7 Appendix 3 sets out the suggestions received from all sources relating to this Board's terms of reference, it includes any items requested by the previous Boards and any incomplete reviews from 2016/2017 that are now within the remit of this Board.
- 1.8 Appendix 4 provides the prioritisation tool, which the Board should utilise in determining its work programme.
- 1.9 The Strategic Risk Register can be viewed [here](#), which the Board may wish to refer to in developing its work programme. A revised risk register will be available in August 2017.
- 1.10 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board has responsibility for approval of work programmes to ensure that there is efficient use of resources and that potential for duplication of effort is reduced.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Board considers the suggestions received from members, partners and the public and, using the Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool, determines its draft work programme for 2017/2018.
- 2.2 That the Board gives consideration to the establishment of working groups to support its two vice-chairs on delivery of their key areas of responsibility.
- 2.3 That the Board submits its draft work programme for 2017/2018 to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for approval.

Darren Carter
Executive Director-Resources

Contact Officer

Deb Breedon
Scrutiny Officer
0121 569 3896

3. Strategic Resource Implications

- 3.1 The Scrutiny function is directly supported by Scrutiny Officers within the Council's Governance service, with technical expertise and evidence on specific matters provided by officers within the various directorates of the authority.
- 3.2 The strategic resource implications of the topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to members on a case by case basis.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 4.1 Local Government Act 2000 states that Councils operating executive arrangements must also make provision for the appointment of overview and scrutiny committees.
- 4.2 Further powers relating to overview and scrutiny are set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Localism Act 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

5. Implications for the Sandwell Vision 2030

- 5.1 A series of ambitions for Sandwell were developed around key themes identified by Cabinet. The Sandwell 2030 Vision and 10 ambitions provide a new vision for Sandwell and subsequently a new Performance Management Framework that replaced the Council's scorecard.
- 5.2 Following consultation and engagement with the public and partners around developing the new vision for Sandwell, the Council approved the Sandwell Vision 2030 at its meeting on 18 July, 2017. The vision and the ten ambitions drives both the Council's own business and budget planning process and drives wider partnership activity in Sandwell.
- 5.3 The Council's vision focuses on creating a resilient borough in terms of both Sandwell's people and the place and ambition to:
 - 1. Raise aspirations and resilience
 - 2. Healthier for longer and safer
 - 3. Young people to have skills for the future
 - 4. Raising the quality of schools
 - 5. Lowering crime and ASB
 - 6. Excellent public transport to the region and beyond
 - 7. Major new housing along transport routes and employment sites
 - 8. Create environments in the six towns where people chooses to live

9. Hosting industries of the future
10. National reputation for getting things done

5.4 The ambitions have been factored into work programme planning for 2017-18 and each report will identify the ambition that is relevant to the topic of the report.

6. Background Details

6.1 Scrutiny is a Member-led function. It is vital that scrutiny members take responsibility for both drawing up and managing their own work programme. The work programme is a working document and should be flexible to respond to new or urgent issues change and members can add, remove, and defer items as necessary. A Work Programme will provide a clear picture to the public and partners of planned scrutiny activity for the year.

6.2 An effective scrutiny work programme should reflect a balance of activities:-

- holding the executive to account
- holding partners to account
- policy review and development
- performance management
- public and community engagement

6.3 Work programmes should be based on sound criteria with a clear rationale for each item. The Scrutiny Team has developed that attached Prioritisation Tool to support the Board through the work programming process. The tool has proven to be a sound method for developing a robust work programme and has been requested and shared with neighbouring authorities.

6.4 In addition to the prioritisation tool a template has been developed to focus each item on the work programme to be signed off by the Chair of the Board. The 'Item Brief' template will identify the following:-

- the reason for and purpose of the item;
- the intended outcome(s);
- links to the Council Vision;
- any specific lines of enquiry requested;
- the lead Director.

6.5 In-depth reviews identified for inclusion in the work programme will be subject to the completion and agreement of a 'Scoping Document'. This document is used to set parameters for the review, identify work tasks and to ensure the work remains focussed and on track. The Scoping Document will identify the following:-

- the reason for and purpose of the item;
- the intended outcome(s);
- links to the Council Vision;
- any specific lines of enquiry requested;
- the lead Director and key officers;
- existing data sources relevant to the topic;
- review work programme (reports, visits, workshops, focus groups etc.)

It should be noted that Scoping Documents are living documents and will be revisited throughout the life of the review to ensure it remains relevant, focussed and possible to deliver.