

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting date: 27 November 2019

**From: Executive Director Corporate, Customer and
Community Services**

Scrutiny Management Board Briefing

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides Scrutiny Management Board with an update on any issues and developments that have occurred since the meeting of the Board on 16 September 2019.

2.0 Issues for Scrutiny

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the range of activity set out in the report
- Note the Work Programme presented in Appendix 1
- Agree a task and finish group is undertaken as set out at 3.5
- Agree the final scope of the task and finish group is agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair of SMB
- Consider the Forward Plan of Key Decisions set out in Appendix 2

3.0 Background

3.1 Scrutiny Management Board last met on 16 September when they received an update on delivery of the Customer Strategy. Members also agreed the scope of a one day task and finish piece of work to explore the management of absence.

3.2 Scrutiny Work Programme

3.3 The Work Programme continues to be kept under review and updated following all Board meetings when additional topics for Scrutiny are suggested. The current Work Programme is presented as Appendix 1 which Members are asked to note.

- 3.4 Future scheduling for the Scrutiny of the Annual Youth Justice Plan will be incorporated into the work programme following comments made at the last Council meeting.
- 3.5 Members are asked to agree a task and finish group be undertaken, led jointly by SMB and Children and Young Peoples Advisory Board. The purpose of this will be to explore lessons learnt relating to the work undertaken recently in respect of the Family Support Contract. Work to develop the scope further with Members is still to take place and therefore Members are asked to agree the Chair and Vice Chair of SMB agree the final scope on behalf of SMB.
- 3.6 **Absence Task and Finish Group**
- 3.7 Members of the task and finish group are confirmed as Cllrs James Airey, Stan Collins, Claire Driver, Shirley Evans, Mike Hawkins, Jim Lister, Val Tarbitt and Mark Wilson, with Cllr Bill Wearing as the Chair. The Chair met with officers from the Policy and Scrutiny team on 23 October to review the range of evidence for consideration during the one day session which took place on 14 November.
- 3.8 Members heard from 4 Assistant Directors on current performance and plans to improve absence management in the areas of the council experiencing the highest levels of absence, as well as receiving a short corporate overview. In addition, Members had the opportunity to discuss these plans, the work planned in relation to organisational culture to support absence management with the lead of the organisational development transformation programme, and to hear from managers about their experiences of managing absence. Members considered the trends and challenges in managing absence, the robustness of existing plans to reduce absence in specific areas of the Council, the range of tools and initiatives in place to support managers in managing absence, and changes to organisational culture.
- 3.9 Members will recall they agreed the Chair and Vice Chair of SMB would agree the final report to Cabinet from the task and finish group. The intention is for the report and recommendations to be presented to Cabinet on 30 January 2020.
- 3.10 **Strategic Planning**
- 3.11 A strategic planning briefing session open to all non-executives will take place on 26th November. At the time of writing this report the session has not taken place. The session will be an opportunity to hear from the Deputy Leader, Chief Executive and Director of Finance about the financial context for the council and the budget consultation. The discussion at this session will inform SMB's response to the budget consultation.

3.12 Self- Assessment and Development Plan

- 3.13 At the last meeting of SMB members approved the Scrutiny Development Plan in response to the findings from the Scrutiny self-assessment; and to support implementation of the national guidance for Scrutiny.
- 3.14 Over the past 3 months research has been undertaken on how to strengthen Scrutiny's engagement in the Strategic Planning process. Consideration has been given to the approaches adopted in other areas, the type of barriers impeding Scrutiny's contribution to the budget setting process and also the levers available to secure meaningful engagement. Work has also been undertaken to assess the work programmes for the Audit Committee, Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Performance Working Group to avoid duplication.
- 3.15 Members will see a refreshed approach the presentation of the Scrutiny Annual Report to Council next year, with an emphasis on communicating Scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority across multiple channels to ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the Scrutiny plays in the organisation.

4.0 Forward Plan

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the Forward Plan provided as Appendix 2 to the report.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Scrutiny of a wide range of issues continues to be kept consideration by each Board. A number of pieces of work are also being led by SMB which will result in recommendations coming forward to support the Council and delivery of priorities.

Helen Blake
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12.11.19

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Work Programme
Appendix 2: Forward Plan

Previous Relevant Council or Executive Decisions
[including Local Committees]

No previous relevant decisions

Background Papers

No background papers

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