Scrutiny Board

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

8 November 2016

Report title	The Development of Scrutiny
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Milkinderpal Jaspal Governance
Wards affected	All
Accountable director	Keith Ireland
Originating service	Democratic Services
Accountable employee(s)	Julia Cleary Scrutiny and Systems Manager Tel 01902 555046 Email julia.cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Leaders Briefing

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

1. That the existing Scrutiny Board work programme be revised so that each meeting going forward will consider a pre-agreed thematic issue presented by a Cabinet Member.
2. That Scrutiny Officers co-ordinate three Council wide presentation sessions a year in the Council Chamber covering high level cross cutting issues.
3. That a dedicated intranet resource is established for all scrutiny members.
4. That review panels consist of no more than 5-7 members and that the maximum number of reviews per year be increased to 6.

Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Board is asked to note:

1. The recommendations to be considered by Council on 9 November 2016 in relation to petitions.

1.0   Purpose

To request that the Board consider a set of proposals regarding the development of the Council's Scrutiny function and specifically proposals relating to the future delivery of the Scrutiny Board.

2.0   Background

2.1   A review has recently been carried out by the Head of Governance in relation to Democratic Services and in particular the scrutiny function. The Managing Director provided a clear directive to the Head of Governance to ensure that the scrutiny function was prioritised and resourced sufficiently.

2.2   The review has established two distinct teams within Democratic Services:

- Democratic Services and
- Scrutiny and Systems.

Each team is to be managed by a Service Manager (both Managers have now been appointed). This will provide additional management capacity in the area of Scrutiny and will be the first time in several years that a manager has been dedicated to the function.

2.3   The review has also retained two full time scrutiny officers (although one of these posts has been vacated recently and recruitment is on-going). Following completion of the review the total staff allocation to the delivery of Scrutiny will be 2.5 FTE which represents an increase in this area of 25%.

3.0   Scrutiny Board

3.1   Scrutiny Board currently considers a range of cross cutting issues and routine updates in relation to corporate complaints, performance and information governance. The Board also executes a statutory role in relation to appeals to responses to petitions.

3.2   Scrutiny Board members have expressed concern regarding the lack of engagement from Cabinet Members in relation to issues that are presented to the Board.

3.3   Currently the only papers that are scheduled to be presented to the Scrutiny Board this municipal year that will require the attendance of a member of the Executive are the budget consultation update, presented by the Cabinet Member for Resources and an update on the Combined Authority, to be presented by the Leader.

3.4   It is proposed that the existing Scrutiny Board work programme be revised and that each meeting going forward will consider a pre-agreed thematic issue presented by a Cabinet Member.

3.5   The suggested programme is:

Meeting date	Thematic Agenda Item	Cabinet Member to present
08-Nov-16	Developments to the Delivery of Scrutiny	Cllr Roger Lawrence, Leader
13-Dec-16	Budget Consultation	Cllr Andrew Johnson, Resources
17-Jan-17	West Midlands Combined Authority Update	Cllr Roger Lawrence, Leader
14-Mar-17	WV Active	Cllr Steve Evans, City Environment
25-Apr-17	TBC	TBC

It is recommended that the Work Plan be updated to reflect this.

3.6   It is also recommended that the Director of Governance be the lead officer for Scrutiny Board and that meetings will always be attended by the Director of Governance, Finance Director or Managing Director.

4.0   Wider Proposals for the Development of Scrutiny

4.1   It is recommended that scrutiny officers co-ordinate three Council wide presentation sessions a year in the council chamber which will cover high level cross cutting issues.

Questions must be submitted prior to the sessions and each session will focus on a specific directorate. All Councillors will be invited to attend these sessions along with the Wider Leadership Team.

Dedicated scrutiny intranet resource

4.2   To enable greater engagement with the scrutiny process it is recommended that a dedicated intranet resource is established for all scrutiny members. The facility will be managed and maintained by the Scrutiny and Systems Manager and will consist of the following resources:

- Details regarding the role and membership of the Scrutiny Board and each panel, historic papers and current work programmes
- Access to all previous Scrutiny Reviews (with real time updating of the status of recommendations)
- Access to annual scrutiny reports
- Facilities for members to raise queries and request information on current areas of work
- Various research facilities and links to best practice scrutiny work from other areas

Future format of scrutiny reviews

4.3   It is recommended that smaller review panels of no more than 5-7 members would potentially allow for more detailed scrutiny of specific issues and provide more focused recommendations back to Cabinet Members. This would also enable Scrutiny Officers to increase the total number of reviews completed each year from three to six.

Petitions

4.4   Scrutiny Board have expressed concern regarding the volume of petitions that are anticipated for particular scrutiny panels.

4.5   Other concerns have also been raised by Members and previously discussed by the Board:

- How meetings where petitions are heard should be managed,
- Training in relation to declarations of interest,
- Whether sub-committees should be established,
- What influence the panels can have in relation to a petition
- Managing the expectations of petitioners invited to a panel.

Proposals in relation to petitions were considered by the Special Advisory Group on 21 October 2016 and the following recommendations will be presented to Council on 9 November:

a. Petitions with fewer than 2,499 signatures be considered and responded to by employees, within 28 days of receipt by the relevant service area. A summary of responses will be reported to Scrutiny Board, the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and, where appropriate, the relevant Ward Members.

b. Petitions with 2,500-4,999 signatures be considered by the relevant scrutiny panel with recommendations made for action by employees or review by the Executive as appropriate.

c. Petitions with 5,000+ signatures be considered by the Council as per the existing arrangements.

The recommendations will potentially remove the need for up to 95% of petitions to go before scrutiny panels.

4.6   **Scrutiny Performance Framework**

There will be a suite of performance measures established for the scrutiny function and these will be monitored through regular updates to the Scrutiny Board. These draft performance measures will be presented to a future Scrutiny Board meeting for agreement. Possible measures include:

- Monitoring the implementation of scrutiny recommendations;
- Scrutiny recommendations arranged by portfolio and scrutiny area with links to corporate outcomes ;
- Officer responses to requests for information from scrutiny members;
- The impact of scrutiny recommendations on service delivery;
- Recommendations made to Cabinet as a direct result of pre decision scrutiny.

5.0   Financial implications

5.1   There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this this report. [GE/28102016/H]

6.0   Legal implications

6.1   There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations in this this report. [TS/01112016/T]

7.0   Equalities implications

7.1   There are no equality implications associated with the recommendations in this report but there will be equality implications in relation to all scrutiny reviews that are carried out.

Officers will assess each review in a timely manner utilising the equalities toolkit when appropriate to ensure that all equalities matters are addressed in an appropriate and proportionate way and listed in all reports presented to members.

8.0   Environmental implications

8.1   There are no environmental implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

9.0   Human resources implications

9.1   There are no human resources implications associated with the recommendations in this report

10.0   Corporate landlord implications

10.1   There are no corporate landlord implications associated with the recommendations in this report