

Briefing Note

Title: Scrutiny Annual Report

Prepared by: Julia Cleary

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Intended audience: Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

1. Purpose or recommendation

1.1 For Scrutiny Board to consider the content and style of the Annual Scrutiny Report that is due to be presented to Full Council in September.

2.0 Overview

2.1 Every year a report is considered by Full Council on the work that has and will be undertaken by Scrutiny and any other elements of the Scrutiny function that are of note.

2.2 The report that went to Council in September 2017 is attached.

3.0 Background and context

3.1 As scrutiny is member led, the Board is requested to consider what it would like to see included in the Annual Scrutiny Report and the format it should take.

4.0 Proposals

4.1 Highlight the work that has and continues to be carried out by the Scrutiny Reviews:

4.2 Scrutiny Reviews have worked well during the last year and emphasis in the report could be on tracking the recommendations from these reviews and evidencing the outcomes and impact they have had:

- Apprenticeships
- Adult Mental Health
- Fire Safety
- Flooding
- Youth Council Mini Reviews

5.0 Highlight the excellent work and best practice from Panel meetings including:

5.1 Stronger City Economy

The Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel successfully held meetings which focused on the economy of a local area, those being Bilston, Wednesfield and Tettenhall. The Scrutiny Panel was able to successfully engage a number of witnesses for each Panel meeting and note their evidence. As a consequence of these meetings, action plans are being developed and progressed. This was a real example of involving the private sector, voluntary sector and

members of the public in Scrutiny and their views ultimately helping to inform policy development. A report is due to be considered at the next meeting of the Panel

[Enabling A Vibrant City Centre](#) and it is hoped to submit a version of this report to the *High Streets and Town Centres in 2030* Select Committee.

5.2 Vibrant and Sustainable Communities

An excellent review on Parking outside schools resulted as a consequence of the Panel commissioning a report on the issue. The review made a number of recommendations accepted in full by the Council's Cabinet. The review was a good example of excellent engagement with the public through the use of social media and was covered on local television. Information leaflets have now been produced following the recommendations made by Scrutiny.

The Panel has commissioned reports and made recommendations on the Private Rented Sector and will continue to scrutinise this area moving forward due to the changes in legislation being implemented. This is an example of how the work of Scrutiny can affect the day to day lives of the people of Wolverhampton. Other examples of this included the Panel looking at the issue of air quality within Wolverhampton and Dog Control. The Panel have made a number of key recommendations after scrutinising these areas.

5.3 Children and Young People

The Panel reviewed the progress of the Headstart Programme and issues highlighted in the programme were included in a response to Government Consultation on mental health support services for young people.

The Panel considered the current pressures on school places, outlined the anticipated future needs of communities, and detailed the status of proposed expansion programmes. This was a good example of scrutiny focusing on issues of concern to local people and taking action on issues that will have a direct effect on the future of the City and its residents. The Panel plans to consider the issue of school exclusions at a future meeting.

5.4 Adult and Safer Communities

The Panel considered the issue of Modern Day Slavery which was a good example of partnership working. The Panel originally considered a report on Modern Day Slavery in September 2017 and received an updated action plan at the meeting in June 2018 to ensure that members were able to evaluate and monitor recommendations.

5.5 Confident Capable Council

The Confident Capable Scrutiny Panel received a report on Smart Working. After scrutinising this issue the Panel recommended a further report be received by the Panel before going on to Cabinet. The second report was commissioned to address some of the issues raised by Members and was a good example of scrutiny using its oversight pre-decision function.

The Panel received a report on treasury management and as a consequence recommended a further report on financial training for Members. The Panel have since recommended to receive training on treasury management by our external management advisors. This was a good

example of scrutiny identifying development opportunities to improve the Council's governance processes.

The Panel commissioned a report on the Council's Strategic Risk Register and asked for a number of specific questions to be answered within the report, which were answered in full. The Panel also looked in detail at the Council's budget consultation process and results.

These examples show Scrutiny working in an assurance role to ensure the Council's processes are fit for purpose.

Following a recommendation from the Chair of the Panel a Financial Explanatory Booklet was produced and updated.

5.6 Health Scrutiny

The Panel have closely monitored the ongoing transformation in Public Health throughout the City and its implications for local people and other service such as the hospital and CCG.

The Panel have also received many reports in relation to the work at the hospital such the Winter Preparation Plan and the hospital mortality rates.

5.7 Highlight future and new ways of working

5.8 This year the Scrutiny Team have already adopted a fresh approach to the Annual Scrutiny Planning Event in the hope of engaging more scrutiny members and producing a workplan that is reflective of both local and national issues and that will produce tangible outcomes and recommendations for consideration.

5.9 The draft Work Plan has also sought to strengthen links between Scrutiny and the Executive by way of introducing Cabinet Member Question time slots and timescales for Member Champions to report back to the Scrutiny Board as they are required to do so in the Constitution.

5.10 The Youth Council mini reviews have been successful, and Scrutiny Officers are investigating other groups which we might also approach. Tentative slots for scrutiny of the Black Country LEP, the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny function and the Police and Crime Commissioner have been built into the draft work plan.

5.11 The way that we carry out scrutiny needs to be flexible and fit for purpose. Options available are:

- Scrutiny Panels
- Scrutiny Reviews
- Site visits
- Information gathering sessions
- Scoping groups

5.12 Engagement from councillors is crucial to the success of scrutiny, scrutiny works when it is member led and focused on a living and relevant workplan.

5.13 The Scrutiny Work Plan

5.14 Scrutiny Members will consider the workplan as a substantial agenda item at every meeting alongside the Council's Forward Plan and any other relevant documents such as:

- The Council's Strategic Risk Register
- The Council Plan and Corporate Priorities
- Items from the Council Wide Briefing Session
- Evaluation of previous reviews or recommendations.

5.15 Councillors may also consider the follow areas when considering the Work Plan:

- Work being carried out by other Public-Sector Bodies (including the WM Combined Authority,
- Local Enterprise Partnerships and other Councils)
- Work being carried out by or in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Wolverhampton College, the University and the NHS
- National issues and concerns (from Select Committees etc. such as Grenfell and Private Sector Housing)

5.16 Working with Partners is also important, and Scrutiny Member may wish to engage with Partners such as:

- The Voluntary Sector
- Partnership working with the Private Sector
- Wolverhampton Homes
- WV Living

5.17 David Jamieson, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, will be attending a future meeting of the panel

5.18 Suggested Appendices for Final Report:

- Recommendations and outcomes from the Fire Safety and updated outcomes and press release.
- Information Leaflets from Parking Outside Schools and the press release.
- Report that went to Scrutiny on Youth Council Reviews?
- Updated Finance Booklet