

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

Monday 20 January 2025

Present:-

Councillor Williams, M (Chair)
Councillors Mitchell, M, Parkhouse, Rees and Pole

Also Present

Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Planning Solicitor, Legal Advisor and Democratic Services Officer

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SCRUTINY NOTE 16 OCTOBER 2024

The Scrutiny Note of the previous meeting held on 16 October 2024 was agreed as a true and accurate record.

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SCRUTINY PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

The following proposal was received and discussed:

To consider the City Council's position on how markets can contribute towards the Council's tourism, economic development and wellbeing goals and how the Council might develop a strategic approach to supporting and enabling markets in the city (Cllr Wetenhall).

Discussion taking into account SMB comments making the following points:

- markets were citywide not only in the city centre;
- there could be learning from what has worked in Topsham and Brillsville;
- Licensing doesn't cover markets but a previous street trading working group had identified gaps in communication between street trading and markets;
- there were not sufficient officer resources for a task and finish group;
- a review of markets could feed into City Centre Strategy, look at the whole city and ensure no conflict between City Centre Strategy and street trading policy; and
- Neighbouring authorities may already have information which could be useful.

It was agreed that a coding system would be used in future for proposals and items to come before Scrutiny committees in order to easily track their origin.

This proposal would be discussed by Strategic Scrutiny on 23 January.

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OFFICER REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

Members agreed to move the Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund to the June meeting of Strategic Scrutiny as per officer request.

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SCRUTINY PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

The Chair introduced the item suggesting that Members of the Board may wish to suggest areas of focus for the coming year. Members' discussed ideas making the following points:

- the constitution was a good starting point;
- Local Government re-organisation could be an area of focus which would come under response to emerging government policy;

- corporate Health & Safety was an area not yet looked at;
- it could be helpful to look at trends in staff absence, accidents, exit surveys to check analysis and subsequent actions;

The Board agreed to revisit this item at the next meeting.

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TIMELINESS OF QUESTIONS TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Members' discussed the expectations of those submitting questions, the role of the Chair in ensuring all committee members are encouraged to engage in debate and acknowledged that the Chairs of both scrutiny committees had done a good job in this area.

The Board agreed to ask the Portfolio Holder to ensure that committees were considered in any constitutional review.

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SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Board discussed methods to support officers in the writing of Annual Scrutiny Report making the following points:

- Chairs could provide a sentence or two of observations of the impact of each item after each committee meeting;
- Portfolio Holders could be asked to comment on the impact of scrutiny on items; and
- Members could be asked what they gained from being on a scrutiny committee or what the impact was their ward work.

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COMBINED SCRUTINY

During discussion the following points were made:

- clarity was needed regarding the scheduled 5 February meeting;
- Members' had already attended Budget Briefings recently;
- a meeting in February would be too late for budget scrutiny;
- Customer Focus Committee could co-opt Members in when needed; and
- The work plan was missing Budget items for Customer Focus Scrutiny in June, November and January.

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SCRUTINY UPDATES FROM OFFICERS

The Board formally noted their thanks to Pierre Doutreligne, Democratic Services Officer as he was now leaving the organisation.

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DRAFT SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

During discussion Members proposed that they might discuss in future how the Portfolio Holder areas fed into each committee.

Members noted the Draft Scrutiny Work Plan.

(The meeting commenced at 5.35 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)

Chair