

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

Thursday 5 September 2024

Present:-

Councillor Williams, M (in the chair)
Councillors Mitchell M, Parkhouse, Pole and Rees

Also Present

Service Lead – Legal & Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager,
Democratic Services Officers (PMD and LS)

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SCRUTINY NOTE OF 17 JUNE 2024 MEETING

The Scrutiny Note of the previous meeting held on 17 June 2024 was agreed as a true and accurate record.

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND PORTFOLIO AREAS

Members and officers noted the new Portfolio areas following the May 2024 election and remarked that some Portfolio Holders had competencies that sat with both Scrutiny committees.

During discussion, Members commented on:-

- the importance of holding service provision rather than Portfolio Holders to account;
- whether the agenda front page was somewhat misleading by emphasising Portfolio Holders rather than their competencies;
- the role of the Scrutiny Programme Board in identifying the most relevant Scrutiny committee for each proposal received;
- the need for flexibility and fluidity; and
- the need to avoid duplication across both Scrutiny committees while maintaining accountability.

Councillor M Mitchell also noted that there were several discrepancies within Exeter City Council's Constitution on the greater topic of Scrutiny; the Monitoring Officer recognised that this would need to be addressed. Officers also reminded Members of the importance of conversations taking place between Scrutiny committee members between meetings.

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SCRUTINY PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

Members were advised that no Proformas had been received by Democratic Services. Councillor M Mitchell reminded Members of the importance of the sequencing of proposals, from the submission stage all the way to the Scrutiny Forward Plan via the different steps in between.

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REPORTING PERIOD FOR ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

Officers advised that, under the current format, the reporting period for the Annual Scrutiny Report was out of sync with the current administration. In this respect, it was proposed by Democratic Services, and agreed by SPB members, that the

following be produced:-

- a 'stop-gap' Annual Scrutiny Report covering the period from September 2023 until April 2024, prefaced by Councillor Allcock, who was the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Board during that time; then
- a full Annual Scrutiny Report, prefaced by Councillor M Williams, covering the period from May 2024 to April 2025.

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ROLE OF SCRUTINY BULLETIN

Members made the following comments on the role and format of the Scrutiny Bulletin:-

- the Scrutiny Bulletin should become a live document that Councillors could refer to in real time;
- the term 'Scrutiny Bulletin' could at times be misleading and 'Member Bulletin' would be more appropriate;
- a 'Member Bulletin' could also provide an index of Member Briefings;
- there should be an option to place planned Scrutiny items on hold to make way for matters arising;
- there should be a clear link between the Scrutiny Bulletin and the Scrutiny process; and
- the Bulletin could be used as a 'repository' for items deemed non-urgent.

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DRAFT SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

Members noted the Draft Work Plan and commented on:-

- the need for Scrutiny Members to be informed of when a report is going to Committee;
- Live & Move;
- how rolling six-monthly updates that had been agreed in the past were not necessarily still relevant or required;
- the possibility to see Member Briefings added to the Forward Plan; and
- the possibility to produce a digested version of the Executive Forward Plan.

(The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and closed at 2.42 pm)

Chair