

Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

5 December 2024

Subject:	Cabinet Forward Plan and Board Work Programme
Director:	James McLaughlin Assistant Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	John Swann Democratic Services Officer

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board notes the Cabinet Forward Plan (Appendix 1), which sets out the matters programmed to be considered by the Cabinet.
- 1.2 That the Board notes its work programme (Appendix 2), which sets out matters to be considered by the Board in 2024/ 25.
- 1.3 That the Board considers whether any changes or additions are required to its work programme and in doing so, has regard to the Prioritisation Tool (Appendix 3).
- 1.4 That the Board establish a working group(s) and the membership thereof.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 A strong and effective work programme underpins the work and approach of Scrutiny.
- 2.2 It is good practice for work programmes to remain fluid, to allow for scrutiny of new and emerging issues in a timely manner.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 10 September 2024 the Board approved that it carry out a scrutiny review entitled 'Bringing Communities Together'. Scoping

exercises had been conducted by the Chair, Vice- Chair and senior officers of the Council, during which it had been identified that the purpose of the review is to foster an improved sense of community, bridge social divides and encourage individuals to be active within their communities.

The proposed key lines of enquiry at present are:

- a) What contributes to improved social cohesion?
- b) How can we foster an improved sense of community?
- c) What motivates people to be active and give back within their community?

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

One Council One Team	The scrutiny function supports all of the objectives of the Corporate Plan by seeking to improve services for the people of Sandwell. It does this by influencing the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services.
Growing Up in Sandwell	
Living in Sandwell	
Healthy in Sandwell	
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	Effective governance arrangements support the delivery of all corporate objectives

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Scrutiny is a member led and driven function, driven by members' commitment to improve services and thereby people's lives.
- 4.2 An annual work programming event, involving chief officers, executive members and key partners, was held in July 2024 for Board Members and all boards approved their work programmes for 2024/ 25 at their first meeting of the municipal year.
- 4.3 Boards have responsibility for their own work programmes, and it is good practice to keep them under review, to allow for new and emerging issues to be scrutinised in a timely manner.

- 4.4 Scrutiny Procedure Rules allow any member of the Council to request that an item is added to a scrutiny board's work programme, subject to certain provisions.
- 4.5 Before including an item on its work programme the Board must have regard to the Prioritisation Tool attached at Appendix 3, to ensure that the scrutiny activity will add value and work programmes are manageable.

5 Implications

Resources:	<p>The Scrutiny function is directly supported by the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Officers within the Council's Law and Governance directorate. Additional technical expertise and evidence on specific matters will be provided by officers within the various directorates of the authority.</p> <p>The strategic resource implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to the Board as required.</p>
Legal and Governance:	<p>Local Government Act 2000 states that Councils operating executive arrangements must also make provision for the appointment of overview and scrutiny committees.</p> <p>Further powers relating to overview and scrutiny are set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Localism Act 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Health and Social Care Acts 2012 and 2022.</p> <p>The legal and governance implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to the Board as required.</p>
Risk:	<p>Any implications arising from scrutiny activity are considered as required by the appropriate director or cabinet member/ cabinet.</p>
Equality:	
Health and Wellbeing:	
Social Value:	
Climate Change:	
Corporate Parenting:	

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Cabinet Forward Plan
Appendix 2 – Board Work Programme
Appendix 3 – Prioritisation Tool

7. Background Papers

None.