

Appendix 5 Scrutiny Management Board

The Scrutiny Management Board, as detailed in Section 4 of this report, met on 16 June 2022, 5 September 2022, 7 October 2022, 28 November 2022, 9 and 17 January 2023. The following is an overview of the items reviewed by the Committee.

ITEM: The role of scrutiny and the Scrutiny Management Board

The committee worked throughout the year on its five main objectives, which were to:

- work closely with the statutory scrutiny officer (SSO) to maintain an effective scrutiny process and to drive continuous improvement
- oversee and coordinate the work of all scrutiny committees
- oversee communications to members and public in relation to scrutiny matters
- undertake the scrutiny role in relation to areas with a strategic and cross cutting nature and
- co-ordinate an annual review of the effectiveness of the scrutiny function.

Appendix 6 details the committee's work to meet these objectives

ITEM: Budget scrutiny and the budget setting process

ITEM: Herefordshire Council's Human Resources and Workforce Strategy

The committee welcomed the development of a new workforce strategy which aims to take in to account recent changes to council working. The committee further welcomed the proactive stance the council is taking to address significant pressures within some service areas, to capitalise on 'Covid legacy' working practices and the evolving leadership team priorities such as Flexible Futures and a 'One Council' culture. The committee recognised the clear linkages set out in the strategic vision of the council with the corporate structures that have been put in place. However, there was a less clear link felt by some staff about how their roles, responsibilities and delivery feed in to the council's strategic vision and plan.

To capitalise on the response from staff in regard to the positive outlook they have in regard to working practices, the committee advised that the executive should ensure the council visions are conveyed more visibly through the updating of the workforce strategy. Alongside this, communications that highlight and celebrate the success of staff should include how their achievements link to specific council priorities.

The committee made the following recommendations:

- Clearer linkages are made between the council's updated workforce strategy to the council priorities, organisational staffing structure and the delivery of service plans.
- In line with the above, key performance indicators are built in to the updated work strategy to help evidence the impact the workforce has in relation to delivering the council local and statutory priorities.
- The committee would like to see time series data captured from 2018 - 2022 in connection to gender pay and reported back to the committee, ideally, as part of the update to the workforce strategy being planned for September 2023.
- Noting the sharp increases in both cost and reliance of interim/agency workforce – particularly in children's services – the committee would like to explore the strategies being developed, in the updated workforce strategy, aimed at retaining and recruiting permanent staff:
 - Through open market recruitment and
 - Incentive schemes designed to retain interim staff to stay at the council on a more permanent footing.
- The learning and development offer provided by Herefordshire Council to its employees is given high prominence within the evolving recruitment and retention strategies and programmes.