

## 6 Scrutiny Management Board action plan

The purpose of the SMB is to provide strategic management, direction and coordination of Herefordshire Council's scrutiny committees. This will enable all scrutiny committees to provide effective constructive critical friend challenge to drive improvement in public services and to be an effective vehicle for non-executive members to contribute to policy development.

Key Role 22/23	OBJECTIVES	22/23 ACHIEVEMENTS & ACTIONS
<p>1. Work closely with the statutory scrutiny officer (SSO) to maintain an effective scrutiny process and to drive continuous improvement</p>	<p>a) Oversee and drive improvements over the process of scrutiny at Herefordshire Council including, communication, workloads and timing, resources, development of work programmes, effectiveness of meetings, mechanisms for Cabinet to provide an Executive Response to scrutiny recommendations and in the monitoring of their implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key roles of the SMB were agreed at the <a href="#">first meeting held 16 June 2022</a> and further refined in <a href="#">September 2022</a>.</li> <li>• All scrutiny chairs were invited to attend cabinet meetings</li> <li>• Chair &amp; Vice-Chair held meetings with SSC and relevant officers to clarify report requests, purpose of scrutiny activity, attendees required</li> <li>• SMB pre-meetings held for each formal committee meeting to discuss potential lines of enquiry</li> <li>• Regular meetings were held with SMB chair and SMB vice-chair with SSO</li> <li>• <a href="#">Annual Scrutiny Work programme</a> for all scrutiny committees was agreed Sept 2022</li> <li>• A standing agenda item was added to cabinet meetings to discuss reports from scrutiny committees starting from <a href="#">29 Sept 2022</a></li> <li>• Progress report was developed to track actions and recommendations from committee eg. <a href="#">Item 12, 9 Jan 2022</a></li> </ul>
	<p>b) Tracking of the implementation and effectiveness of the Rethinking Governance Working Group (RTGWG) recommendations in relation to scrutiny</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited formal tracking has been undertaken due to lack of resources.</li> <li>• RTGWG was overseen by the Audit &amp; Governance Committee. Action 149 has been raised in the <a href="#">Audit &amp; Governance Action Log</a> to track the progress of RTGWG recommendations</li> </ul>
	<p>c) To consider scrutiny member training and development requirements</p>	<p>A comprehensive training programme was implemented in relation to Scrutiny, led by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS):</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Session A. The Essentials of Scrutiny &amp; having impact (Mandatory – April 2021)</li> <li>•Session B. Prioritising and work planning (June 2021)</li> <li>•Session C. Chairing and Leading (Mandatory for Chair/Vice – May 2021)</li> <li>•Session D. Specifying and using information and witness evidence gathering (June 2021)</li> <li>•Session E. Developing an analytical approach to questioning. Building questioning strategies (Mandatory – June/July 2021)</li> <li>•Session F. Working with scrutiny – building understanding and constructive relationships (Officer training April 2021)</li> </ul> <p>Further external training was obtained in relation to treasury management (December 2022). This training was focused on SMB members, however, all members were also invited to attend.</p>
2. Oversee and coordinate the work of all scrutiny committees	a) Agree the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme, that being the combined Work Plans of the scrutiny committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<a href="#">Annual Scrutiny Work programme</a> for all scrutiny committees was agreed Sept 2022</li> <li>•Directors and cabinet members were invited to attend the work programming sessions for each scrutiny committee so that their suggestions on where scrutiny could potentially add the most value could be considered</li> </ul>
	b) Where a matter falls within the remit of one or more scrutiny committees, decide which committee will consider it and whether a	<p>No matters came to the SMB to consider</p> <p>No working groups were established under SMB for 22/23</p>

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	<p>working group such as a spotlight, task and finish or standing panel review is appropriate</p> <p>c) To ensure that there is an efficient use of committees' time and the potential that duplication of effort is minimised</p>	<p>Several items were undertaken differently during 22/23 to try and be more efficient and effective. Some key examples would be the amalgamation of an annual scrutiny work programme and the budget process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The annual scrutiny work programme agreed by the SMB allowed an overview to challenge work proposed and identify any potential duplications</li> <li>• Priorities &amp; positioning of budget was discussed prior to budget setting</li> <li>• In year scrutiny of quarterly budget and corporate performance was introduced</li> <li>• Treasury management scrutiny was introduced</li> <li>• 23/24 Proposed Budget scrutiny was performed by the SMB rather than all individual committees.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Overseeing communications to members and public in relation to scrutiny matters</p>	<p>a) manage relationships between scrutiny committees, the Executive, working groups and the general public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All scrutiny chairs are members of the SMB</li> <li>• <a href="#">Scrutiny web pages</a> were updated during the year</li> <li>• A standing agenda item was added to cabinet meetings to discuss reports from scrutiny committees starting from <a href="#">29 Sept 2022</a></li> <li>• Unfortunately, not all RTGWG recommendations were fully implemented during the year. The informal executive protocol meetings did not occur and improvements are still required in this area to improve communications with the Executive, Members and the Audit &amp; Governance Committee</li> <li>• Limited resources were available during the year to undertake many working groups. Operational actions were identified by the committee to ensure information about working groups was more easily accessible by members</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work still required to refine the forward plan, scrutiny web pages and dissemination of performance, management and risk information to each scrutiny committee</li> </ul>
4. To undertake the scrutiny role in relation to areas with a strategic and cross cutting nature	<p>b) oversee process of communication with significant partners, expert witnesses and other members of the public</p> <p>a) To undertake cross cutting scrutiny in relation to matters such as finance and treasury, people and performance, Corporate Support including legal and information technology, and communications</p>	<p>Due to limited resources, this in an area that requires greater focus in 23/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A key change implemented during 22/23 was the line of questioning undertaken in committee. All questions were generally directed to the relevant cabinet member rather than the officer</li> <li>• In year budget scrutiny improved over the year as members became more familiar with the information and process</li> </ul> <p>SMB undertook the following cross cutting work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Herefordshire Council Human Resources and Workforce Strategy Scrutiny</a></li> <li>• In Year Budget and Corporate Performance Scrutiny (<a href="#">Q4 2022 &amp; Q1</a>) (<a href="#">Q2</a>)</li> <li>• <a href="#">23/24 Proposed Budget</a> Scrutiny</li> <li>• <a href="#">Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Review</a> scrutiny. Expert witnesses attended this session to aid SMB understanding.</li> </ul> <p>Unfortunately due to lack of resources and timing issues we were unable to review Hoople or formally consider the effectiveness of 22/23 scrutiny development</p>
	b) To agree recommendations to the Executive and to monitor progress	Progress report developed to track actions and recommendations from committee eg. <a href="#">Item 12, 9 Jan 2022</a>

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	c) To scrutinise strategic partners where appropriate such as Hoople Limited	Unfortunately due to lack of resources and timing issues we were unable to review Hoople. However, it remains on the work programme for consideration in 23/24
	d) To undertake statutory legislative duties relevant to the area of scrutiny	There are no statutory legislative duties delegated to the SMB
5. To co-ordinate an annual review of the effectiveness of the scrutiny function	a) Receiving reporting and monitoring from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer on effectiveness of all 5 scrutiny committees	Due to timings and pre-election period, this has not been formally completed.
	b) Oversee the process of reporting recommendations and tracking the executive response and impact of associated actions	Progress report developed to track actions and recommendations from committee eg. <a href="#">Item 12, 9 Jan 2022</a>