

SCRUTINY FRAMEWORK AND MANUAL UPDATE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposed changes to the Council's Scrutiny Framework and Manual. Both have been updated to reflect amendments to the scrutiny process following the Scrutiny development session held on 27 April 2021 as approved at the Audit and Scrutiny (the Committee) on 15 June 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve the amended Scrutiny Manual (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 To approve the amended Scrutiny Framework (Appendix 2).

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In March 2018 the Committee approved the Council's Scrutiny Framework which incorporated the scrutiny prioritisation process. In June 2018 the Committee endorsed a Scrutiny Manual which provided more detailed guidance on how to carry out a scrutiny review.
- 3.2 In the four years since those two governance documents were approved we have continued to evolve our approach to scrutiny as we have reflected on what works well, where improvements can be made and alternative ways of performing scrutiny in addition to the current Scrutiny Panel approach.
- 3.3 In March 2020 the Committee considered a 'Scrutiny- Lessons Learned' report. The 'Lessons Learned' were those identified by:
- Scrutiny Panel members
 - Scrutiny Panel witnesses (both internal and external to the Council)
 - the Chief Internal Auditor (CIA and scrutiny officers)
- 3.4 The Lessons learned report also reflected on discussions that had been held during Committees about whether there were different ways that the Committee could perform scrutiny that would complement the Scrutiny Panel approach. For example by inviting council officers to brief the Committees on topics of specific interest.
- 3.5 In April 2021 a development session was held to discuss potential scrutiny topics for review and consider amendments to the scrutiny process.

3.6 The scrutiny topic identification, prioritisation and overall approach adopted at that time was outlined to the Committee. The Committee were asked to consider some key questions and the responses are summarised below:

- There needs to be a degree of flexibility to change topics and to be able to react quickly to an ever changing environment.
- It is for the Committee to determine scrutiny topics
- Depending on the number of emerging topics, the Committee may need to meet more often, however these could be less formal and held virtually
- An annual Scrutiny Plan is not required, topics should be allowed to emerge
- The prioritisation process is there as a tool if needed, but there is no need to assess every scrutiny topic
- There has been value in having full panel meetings but these are resource intensive and scrutiny lite should be adopted where appropriate.

3.7 The Scrutiny Manual (Appendix 1) and Scrutiny Framework (Appendix 2) have been further revised to reflect our evolving approach. The paragraphs below provide a summary of the material changes to both documents (very minor changes have not been detailed):

3.8 Scrutiny Manual Changes

| Page | Para | Summary of Change | Reason for Change |
|-----------------|---------|--|---|
| 3 | 2 and 4 | Potential topics replaced with identified topics | It was agreed that it is for the Committee to identify topics for scrutiny review, other members and senior council officers will no longer be requested to submit potential topics for scrutiny. |
| App 1 and App 2 | | Removed reference to Scrutiny Work Plan | It was agreed that an annual scrutiny plan is not required as topics should be allowed to emerge. |
| App 1 and App 2 | | CIA contact email address updated to internal audit team address | The CIA has been appointed to the Head of Service Roll additionally it is considered more appropriate that any communication received can be accessed by the scrutiny officers to address any minor matters or escalate if appropriate. |

3.9 Scrutiny Framework Changes

| Page | Para | Summary of change | Reason for Change |
|-----------|------|---|---|
| 4 and App | 10 | Removed reference to Scrutiny Work Plan | It was agreed that an annual scrutiny plan is not required as topics should be allowed to emerge. |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| 1 | | | |
| 5 | 14 | Paragraph updated to explain revised flexible approach to identify topics for scrutiny review | It was agreed that there needs to be a degree of flexibility to change topics and to be able to react quickly to an ever changing environment. |

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The CIA has updated the Scrutiny Framework and Scrutiny Manual to reflect decisions taken at the development session held on 27 April 2021 and the Council's evolving approach to scrutiny.

5 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - None
- 5.2 Financial –None
- 5.3 Legal –None
- 5.4 HR – None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – None
- 5.5.1 Equalities – None
- 5.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None
- 5.5.3 Islands Duty – None
- 5.6 Climate Change - None
- 5.7 Risk – None
- 5.8 Customer Service – None

For further information please contact Internal Audit (01546 604146)

Moir Weatherstone
Interim Chief Internal Auditor
15 March 2022

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Manual**
- Appendix 2 - Scrutiny Framework**