

# Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda  
Item:

**A.3**

Meeting Date: 06 September 2018  
Portfolio: Cross-cutting  
Key Decision: No  
Within Policy and Budget Framework  
Private/Public Public  
  
Title: Draft Itinerary for Efficiency related Inquiry day  
Report of: Policy & Communications Manager  
Report Number: OS.23/18

## Purpose / Summary:

This report provides an outline itinerary for the Inquiry day relating to efficiency and efficiency planning, further to discussions at the July meeting of the panel.

## Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Note the draft itinerary for the forthcoming efficiency Inquiry day

## Tracking

Executive:	<b>Not applicable</b>
Scrutiny:	<b>06/09/18</b>
Council:	<b>Not applicable</b>

# **Draft Itinerary for Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry day relating to the Council's efficiency arrangements.**

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## **1. Introduction.**

- 1.1 At their recent meeting on 26 July, members of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel requested that an Inquiry day be held in the coming months, to better understand various aspects the council's efficiency arrangements. Subsequent to a short meeting between the acting Chair of the panel and the Overview and Scrutiny officer, to establish members' requirements, this outline draft has been prepared for discussion and, if necessary, further work.
- 1.2 From the discussions to date, a number of themes have emerged which could form the starting point from which an agenda for an inquiry day could emerge. In no particular order, it is clear that some members feel the need for part of the day to be devoted to training / education, both in relation to concepts of efficiency and the relationship between efficiency and the Council's key strategic plans, notably its budget and MTFP.
- 1.3 Other areas which have been indicated as being relevant to any inquiry are as follows: -
  - The Council's performance against the current efficiency regime, ie that which was submitted to government as part of the 'deal' to secure a 4 year financial settlement
  - How the Council demonstrates to itself, its Council Tax payers and the outside world, that it is an efficient Local Authority
  - The nature of the Council's commitment to an ongoing future efficiency regime.

The paragraphs below suggest some possible lines of inquiry within the four main areas for the inquiry day.

## **2. Training related issues**

- 2.1 The following are put forward as suggested areas for training / development: -
  - Overview of efficiency to encompass, definition and differences between economy, efficiency, and effectiveness (with examples)

- How efficiency is incorporated into financial and performance planning
- Overview of current requirement to produce efficiency plan for government (including any ongoing reporting requirements)
- Efficiency and budgeting techniques
- Monitoring of efficiency plans

### **3. The current Efficiency regime**

3.1 This will start from the efficiency plan originally submitted to Government prior to the 2016-17 financial year, and will then work through plan with particular reference to: -

- Overview of chosen methodology
- Planned and actual performance of initiatives
- How shortfalls are dealt with
- Evidence which demonstrates that earlier gains remain in place
- Compliance with any requirements of government

### **4. A demonstration of the Council's efficiency**

4.1 This area could deal with lines of inquiry such as: -

- The extent to which the Council follows best practice and relevant guidance
- How leaders show leadership in support of efficiency
- How the Council measures and reports how efficient it is
- Evidence of techniques used to highlight efficiency, for example comparative analysis with class leaders and similar authorities

### **5. Nature of future commitment to efficiency**

5.1 This could deal with lines of inquiry such as: -

- Drilling down into the Council's stated efficiency strategy, which covers the following areas:-
  - Via the Asset Strategy
  - From Service Reviews
  - From Core budgets
- The nature of the need for an ongoing programme of efficiency.

## **6. General**

- 6.1 To make the event meaningful for members, it is hoped that much relevant information can be produced (mostly if not exclusively from existing records) in advance of the actual inquiry day. This will give members some time to better understand the information and thus make the scrutiny more meaningful on the day

Similarly, it is hoped that the process will be able to support some questions being asked and a written answer provided in advance of the inquiry day. In both instances, this will hopefully help the scrutiny process by increasing members understanding of issues prior to the inquiry event and, in doing so, being able to perform the scrutiny role more effectively.

- 6.2 It is hoped that a number of staff can be made available to support the inquiry day to increase its success. This should include senior management, finance staff and senior budget holders (where relevant). The involvement of appropriate external bodies might also add value to the event.

**Michael Thompson**

**Overview and Scrutiny Officer**

**9 August 2018**