

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
8 March 2023

Future Scrutiny Arrangements

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To discuss future scrutiny arrangements for the 2023/24 municipal year onwards.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to discuss future scrutiny arrangements for the 2023/24 municipal year onwards to help make scrutiny more effective. Points for discussion are suggested in paragraph 3.5 below.

3 Background information

- 3.1 Following the review of scrutiny carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) in 2021, work has been underway to improve the scrutiny function and increase the resources available to support it within the Governance Team.
- 3.2 Changes to the arrangements are suggested to address issues including:
- (a) the balance of business between the Committees
 - (b) provide the opportunity for members to develop more detailed specialist knowledge in subject areas outside of children/health/adult social care
 - (c) enable Committees to work programme more effectively by the Chair having regular meetings with the relevant Corporate Director and Portfolio Holder to be made aware of upcoming issues.
- 3.3 The limited capacity for scrutiny support has been an ongoing issue which is now being addressed and additional resources to support scrutiny have been included in the budget proposals which, if approved, gives the opportunity to make changes to the structure to help it continue in its improvement journey.
- 3.4 Input from the Committee is required in order to help shape the proposals for future scrutiny arrangements, and this paper is to help prompt discussion on the pertinent points.

3.5 The broad issues for the Committee to consider include:

- (a) the number of scrutiny committees needed and the remits they should have. Some options for this include aligning the Committees with the Directorates, or aligning them with Portfolio responsibilities, as is done in other Core Cities
- (b) the frequency of meetings, and whether some Committees need to meet more or less frequently
- (c) membership numbers for the Committees and whether representation of political parties should be broadened (subject to electoral outcomes)
- (d) member capacity to sit on a potential increased number of Committees
- (e) whether a Call-In Sub-Committee is required or whether call-in requests would be better dealt with by each Committee
- (f) whether the summer period should be used to hold Informal training/development/briefing sessions for scrutiny councillors, to include:
 - introduction to scrutiny – role, function
 - scrutiny skills and ways of working
 - committee specific briefing(s) on relevant Council services, partners, legislation
 - work programming and specific committee work programme

and only schedule a formal meeting in June or July if there is a specific issue that scrutiny needs to react to.

4 List of attached information

4.1 None.

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

5.1 None.

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

6.1 None.

7 Wards affected

7.1 All.

8 Contact information

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