

Governance Working Group

Proposed changes to Overview and Scrutiny

27 February 2020

Drivers for change

Current arrangements not satisfactory.

Pre-Scrutiny of Cabinet reports the night before a Cabinet decision not effective.

Scrutiny should be advisory, with involvement in shaping council policy, to influence decision-making on major issues facing the council.

Scrutiny is best undertaken without political interference.

A clear role for Scrutiny

An opportunity for Members to have an impact and influence the work of the council.

Focus more on pre-scrutiny at an early stage, i.e. assist in the development of major, strategic policies, programmes of works, projects, etc.

Not just act as a rubber stamp

Work plan items to be properly scoped, allowing for clear outcomes.

Less busy agendas, allowing members to give more time and focus to consider individual issues on matters of significance to the work of the council.

“Scrutiny should be a strategic function
of the authority.

It should be central to the organisation’s
corporate governance, a crucial cog in the
decision-making machine”.

*Centre for Public Scrutiny –
Taking Scrutiny Seriously - January 2020*

Proposed changes

Reduction in number of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 11 to 5 or 6 per year.

Creation of a finance and performance sub-group to meet quarterly.

Committee work plan to include about 12 clearly scoped topics, allowing for a deep dive into two topics per meeting.

Work plan topics to have clear lines of enquiry, questions, and to draw on external expertise as necessary.

Members to lead the items at Scrutiny meetings.

Call-in function remains available.

Proposed next steps:

If supported by the Governance working group:

- Meeting schedule to be considered.
- Work plan topics to be considered (see next slide).
- Members encouraged to develop lines of enquiry and questions for the work plan.
- Training to be provided to Members and staff.
- Clear expectations established – cultural change and continuous improvement.

Formal proposal for agreement at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April, then Annual meeting of Council in May.

Ongoing support from CFPS through change in 20/21.

Potential topics:

CIL - Strategic Investment Framework and governance for decision-making.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

Fireworks

Modern slavery

Licensing policy; Taxi policy; Discretionary Business Rates Policy

ED Strategy.

HRA: new build & acquisition programme; estate renewal programme.

Homelessness

Update from Climate and Ecological Working Group, including pesticide motion.

Update from Town Centre Working Group – progress, impact,

PREVENT & Safeguarding (statutory item)

Oportunitas

Waste

Car parking

Potential for OSC Chairman to assign a named OSC Member to scope each topic being considered.

Questions?