

FC83. Review of Scrutiny

Council considered a report by the Chief Executive which presented the recommendations of a review of Scrutiny arrangements together with proposed changes to Standing Orders. Council requested a review of the structure, governance and development of scrutiny within the Council. This was to be carried out with a view to providing the resources and infrastructure for Councillors to carry out their scrutiny role effectively.

The review was carried out by Councillors Black, Meiklejohn and Munro together with the Chief Executive, Chief Governance Officer and Head of Policy, Technology & Improvement. The group's considerations focussed on three main themes of structures; support and capacity, and training and development. The group felt that the key to reinvigorating the scrutiny function was to embed the benefits and value of effective scrutiny organisationally, to simplify the scrutiny arrangements and provide support to scrutiny panels, policy development panels and the scrutiny committees more generally.

The review recommended that the following actions were taken forward:-

- (1) Remove the disconnect between the Performance Panel and the Scrutiny Committee by subsuming the work of the Panel in the workload of the Committee and disbanding the Panel. Should Council agree this proposal a number of changes were required to Standing Orders. Appendix 1 to the report set out the relevant sections. It was proposed that the business for meetings of the Scrutiny Committee would fall into two categories. The first part being Service performance reports. All members would be entitled, and encouraged, to participate in that element of scrutiny. Voting, should there be any, would be restricted to the Committee members. The second part of the agenda would be committee business such as the Scrutiny plan and items requested following consideration of Services' performance reports with participation limited to member of the Committee.
- (2) Reboot the organisational approach to scrutiny through training and development for elected members and officers. A review of training would be undertaken to ensure that elected members were provided with information and training opportunities to undertake their scrutiny roles. Similarly training would be developed to support officers in their roles at the Committees and Panels.
- (3) Utilise the opportunity afforded by the Graduate and Intern Scheme, by engaging a Graduate Support Officer to provide support to Scrutiny Panels, Policy Development Panels and the Scrutiny Committees. The post would be for a two year period located within the Governance Division of Corporate and Housing Services. The Graduate Support Officer would organise meetings, coordinate input from services, provide research support to the Panels, identify and coordinate training needs and develop support materials, and provide overarching consistency in the scrutiny process.

Decision

Council agreed:

- (1) the recommendations of the review of scrutiny arrangements, noting that officers will proceed to give effect to recommendation (2) and (3) as set out in section 4.5 of the report, and**
- (2) the revised Standing Orders as set out in appendix 1 to the report.**