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## **Scrutiny Management Committee**

**27 February 2012**

Report of the Assistant Director Governance & ICT

### **Proposed Amalgamation of Effective Organisation and Scrutiny Management Committees**

#### **Summary**

1. This report updates Members of this Committee (SMC) on proposals to merge Effective Organisation and Scrutiny Management Committees into one new scrutiny committee, responsible for corporate scrutiny management and overview.

#### **Background**

2. In April 2011, SMC received an initial report on proposals to amalgamate the two Committees, to benefit from the resource efficiencies of running one Committee instead of two and to eliminate duplication of roles.
3. On 13 February, 2012, Audit & Governance Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director (Governance & ICT) setting out various proposed changes to the Council's decision making and scrutiny structure. Audit & Governance Committee endorsed proposals to amalgamate Effective Organisation and Scrutiny Management Committees, subject to Council approval at a future meeting. It is likely that the proposed merger will take effect from the new Municipal Year.

#### **Consultation**

4. As stated in paragraph 2 above, SMC has previously been consulted on the proposal. Audit & Governance Committee has now also been consulted.

#### **Options**

5. Having considered this report, Members may choose to note the position of Audit & Governance Committee on this issue and may choose to endorse the proposal or not. In addition, SMC may choose to comment or amend the suggested terms of reference for a new Committee (see Annex A).

## **Analysis**

6. If Council decides to support the proposed merger and create a new overarching management committee for Scrutiny taking on board the corporate effectiveness role of 'Effective Organisation Committee', a new remit and terms of reference for that Committee will need to be agreed. Attached at Annex A to this report are some suggested terms of reference for a merged Corporate Scrutiny Management Committee, taking in the existing responsibilities of Effective Organisation Overview & Scrutiny Committee. If a decision were taken to amalgamate the role of both Committees, the ability to carry out reviews would not be lost. Future reviews on topics falling within the new Corporate SMC's (CSMC) remit could still be carried out, either by CSMC as a whole, or by a small Task Group of its Members, or by an Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee created solely for that purpose.
7. In addition, SMC would retain its 'call-in' role. As discussed previously by Members, this could be reinforced slightly by CSMC, in its new role, requiring Cabinet Members to attend and address CSMC regarding the decision called-in. In return, the Chair (or Vice-Chair) of CSMC would attend Cabinet to explain why CSMC had invited Cabinet or the Cabinet Member to reconsider its decision, where applicable.
8. Meetings of any new merged corporate scrutiny committee would be scheduled in effect to take place during the same week currently 'occupied' by Effective Organisation Scrutiny Committee, on the basis that the new Committee would assume its corporate monitoring responsibilities and these are reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny on a cyclical basis.

## **Council Plan 2011-15**

9. Through its overview and scrutiny work and the management of other Scrutiny Committees, any new Corporate Management Committee should work to ensure that all scrutiny activities achieve and challenge the best possible delivery of the Council's 5 core priorities under the Council Plan 2011-2015.

## **Implications**

9. **HR & Financial** - There will be a slight saving made by reducing the number of meetings, in terms of fewer meetings for Democratic Services to prepare reports for and fewer meetings to attend. Equally, there would be fewer meetings for Directorate officers to attend and support.

10. **Legal** – The approval of Full Council will be required to the proposed merger as it would be a change to the Council’s current decision making and scrutiny structure.
11. There are no other known implications associated with the recommendation in this report

**Risk Management**

12. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

**Recommendations**

13. Having considered the information within this report, Members are asked to comment upon the proposed merger of Effective Organisation and Scrutiny Management Committees and upon any proposed terms of reference for a new Committee:

Reason: To ensure the scrutiny function remains robust and fit for purpose.

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**Report Approved**  **Date** 21 February 2012

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** - None

**Wards Affected:**

All



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None

**Annex A:** Draft terms of reference for merged Committee