

Executive

18 March 2019

Report of the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee

Scrutiny Operations and Functions Review Final Report – Cover Report

Summary

1. This cover report presents the final report from the Scrutiny Operations and Functions Review and asks the Executive to approve the recommendations arising from the review.
2. The final report is subject to approval of the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) at its meeting on 11 March and this paper has been published prior to that meeting in view of the statutory timescales for publication of reports. CSMC's decision and any changes to the report or the review recommendations arising from that meeting will be circulated to Executive.

Recommendation

3. Having considered the Scrutiny Operations and Functions Review Final Report at Appendix 1 the Executive is asked to approve the recommendations as shown in paragraph 8, below.

Reason: To conclude this scrutiny review in line with CYC scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Background

4. In June 2018 CSMC considered an update report on the implementation of changes to the Council's scrutiny function resulting from the review of 'Future Ways of Working in Scrutiny' completed in March 2017.
5. Specifically the Committee considered the operation of a trial in relation to establishing two Economy and Place Committees, the alignment of Scrutiny Committees to Directorates and concerns raised regarding the

increased workload faced by the Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee now that the housing and community safety elements of the Directorate has been included in the remit of the former Health and Adult Social Care policy and Scrutiny Committee.

6. CSMC agreed to review how the scrutiny function moves forward for the next administration and to appoint a Task Group comprising Councillors Williams, Galvin, Reid and D'Agorne to carry out this work on the Committee's behalf. The Task Group met for the first time in August 2018 and agreed the remit below, which was approved by CSMC in September 2018.

Aim:

To propose operational arrangements and a structure for scrutiny to improve engagement and outcomes, ensuring that the function is as effective as possible.

Objectives:

Structure

- To address the balance of committee workloads
- To evaluate the current functions of Scrutiny Committees, including pre and post decision call-in, overview and the performance management role

Engagement

- To assess the current level of officer and member engagement and explore ways to improve it
- To explore ways to establish robust and measurable work planning

Training

- To assess the need for member training and on-going development on scrutiny topics

Consultation

7. Over a series of meetings the Task Group met with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Council's scrutiny committees and members of the Corporate Management Team. In addition the Task Group took into

account the Local Government Committee's recommendations to Central Government on the Effectiveness of Local Government Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Local Government Association's 'Scrutiny for Councillors' Workbook 2015.

Review Recommendations

8. The information gathered from the Task Group's consultations and considerations led to the following review recommendations:

Structure:

- i. That the Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee be split into:
- Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee;
 - Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason: The Committee's extended remit is too large to allow effective scrutiny.

- ii. That the Economy and Place Policy Development and Scrutiny Committees are rejoined.

Reason: To end the uncertainty around the roles of each committee and to provide Economy and Place with a comprehensive scrutiny function

Engagement

- iii. In support of the work undertaken by scrutiny, that the Executive continue to formally respond to all Scrutiny Reviews, implementing recommendations it considers appropriate and reporting back to Scrutiny on any it considers inappropriate, explaining its reasons.

Reason: To demonstrate that the work of scrutiny is valued and to keep it informed of the implementation of review recommendations

- iv. That the relevant Chief Officers attend appropriate Scrutiny Committee meetings as a matter of course.

Reason: To fully engage with scrutiny members and to present and assist with detailed reports.

- v. That the Chief Executive and other Chief Officers actively promote involving scrutiny in the development of policy to their teams and encourage that issue be brought early to scrutiny for discussion.

Reason: To give scrutiny a greater opportunity to add value and bring greater transparency to policy development.

- vi. That Executive Members are encouraged to attend relevant scrutiny committee meetings on a regular basis.

Reason: To give scrutiny a greater opportunity to add value and bring greater transparency to policy development.

- vii. That public engagement with scrutiny is reviewed to better promote its aims and outcomes.

Reason: To improve public awareness of and engagement with the role of scrutiny

Work Planning

- viii. That the Executive's Forward Plan be used to guide scrutiny as a matter of course and help inform its own work planning.

Reason: So scrutiny is involved in early consultation and discussion on issues due for decision

- ix. That Directorate priorities are shared with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the relevant scrutiny committees and that regular meetings take place between these members and the relevant Chief Officers in order to help inform the business of their Committees.

Reason: To help Scrutiny plan its programme of work.

- x. That scrutiny committee meetings are held monthly.

Reason: To respond to the increased workloads experienced by some scrutiny committees and to allow for more pro-active and extensive scrutiny.

- xi. That scrutiny committees be aware of relevant opportunities to scrutinise the activities of external bodies providing public services affecting the city and its residents (Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee already actively performing this role given its statutory obligations).

Reason: To enable scrutiny to maintain a watching brief on organisations providing services that affect members of the public.

Calling-in process

- xii. That the Pre-Decision Call-In process be removed from the Constitution.

Reason: To encourage a more timely and pro-active approach to pre-decision scrutiny.

Support and Development for Members

- xiii. That current scrutiny resource is reviewed with consideration being given to additional support for scrutiny to enhance support for Members and help improve the organisational quality of Scrutiny and its outcomes

Reason: To further improve engagement with and the delivery of the scrutiny function in York.

- xiv. That Scrutiny Members receive factual briefings on areas of chosen interest or review in relation to their Committees, to ensure they are better and adequately equipped to undertake allocated work.

Reason: To improve the quality of scrutiny.

CSMC

- xv. That the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee review the work and functionality of Scrutiny on an annual basis.

Reason: To ensure the scrutiny function improves and develops.

Options

9. Having considered the final report at Appendix 1 the Executive can chose to approve and/or amend, or reject the recommendations arising from the review as set out in paragraph 8, above.

Council Plan

10. As Scrutiny has an overarching function within CYC activities the recommendations in this report will at some stage be linked to all the priorities in the Council Plan.

Implications and Risk Management

11. The risks and implications associated with the review recommendations above are included in the review final report at Appendix 1.

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Scrutiny Operations and Function Final Report