

City Of York Council

Extract from Committee Minutes

Meeting	Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	13 February 2017
Present	Councillors Williams (Chair), Crisp, D'Agorne, Fenton, Gates, Levene, Reid, Dew (Substitute for Councillor Galvin) and Steward (Substitute for Councillor Lisle)
Apologies	Councillors Galvin and Lisle

Part B - Matters Referred to Council

45. Future Ways of Working in Scrutiny

[See also Part A minute]

Members were asked to consider a report which provided an update on the ongoing work to examine alternative committee structures to support the Council in delivering its scrutiny function and reported back on the consultation with political groups and the Corporate Management Team.

The Corporate Director of Economy and Place was in attendance in order to give the Committee feedback from the Corporate Management Team (CMT). He stated that whilst this was purely a Member decision, CMT were in full support of the recommendation of Officers. They felt that scrutiny in its current format was ineffective and that the suggested structure would allow a culture change; moving away from silo working towards a one council approach. In response to member questions he clarified that CMT were in full support of Option (iv).

Officers gave a brief background to the report and an overview of how the new structure would work in practical terms. They also circulated an update to the table at para.13 of the report.

After questions from Members they stated:

- The number of statutory co-opted Members required under the new structure would be the same as under the existing structure. This would be on an invitation basis to

any committee where relevant matters were being discussed. In the example of parent governors, it could be that work plans were organised to ensure that discussion of education matters be limited to a set number of meetings per year.

- Research for the report had been sourced from the Centre for Public Scrutiny in December 2016. It was clarified that Selby was used as an example as they were the authority which had most recently gone through the process of making changes to overview and scrutiny.

Members then extensively debated the issue, which focussed on:

- what model might best achieve the organisational cultural change required to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny in York
- existing skills and specialisms already developed by Members in scrutiny and what model would best utilise those
- the advantages and disadvantages of the models before them: aligning to Directorates might exacerbate silo working but might also provide simpler working lines/reporting structures; option (iv) would give clear focus on scrutiny roles, providing early opportunities for engaging with and flagging up policy development
- appropriate skills training for Members
- irrespective of the model adopted, Members expressed some concerns about the operation of the current pre-decision call in process, triggered by business appearing on the Forward Plan. Officers added that Option (iv) would facilitate removal of the current process by providing a clear route for early policy development and engagement

Councillor Levene then moved and Councillor Crisp seconded the adoption of Option (iv) to Council. On being put to the vote that motion fell.

Option (iii) aligning Scrutiny Committees to Directorates was then moved and seconded on the understanding that opportunities be made available to review the current pre-decision call in arrangements and to improve engagement generally with scrutiny.

Recommended: That Council approve and adopt Option (iii) to align Scrutiny Committees to the new Directorates in accordance with the approach for this option set out in the report.

Reason: To fulfil the scrutiny management role of this Committee, and enable any changes required to the scrutiny function to be presented to Full Council in March 2017 for approval.

Councillor D Williams, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.40 pm].