

Review of Scrutiny Function

Analysis of Option (iii) – No Change to current structure other than bringing remits in line with Directorates

1. Disadvantages with Current Structure

Making no change to the current structure other than bringing remits in line with Directorates will do nothing to address the known disadvantages of the current arrangements, as detailed in paragraphs 2-9 of the main report e.g.:

- Lack of corporate capacity
- Limited number of suitable scrutiny topics submitted
- Limited number of ambitious recommendations and measurable outcomes
- Lack of engagement by non-Executive members
- Too much focus on Health overview – only 9 Health scrutiny reviews completed since 2005
- Minimal policy development work undertaken (The current pre-decision scrutiny arrangements put in place following the local election in 2015 have not resulted in the hoped for shift towards scrutiny's earlier involvement in the decision making process)

2. Furthermore, there are some additional disadvantages of this option, as it would:

- Encourage directorate/silo working - working in silos has the potential for scrutiny committees to become less corporately supportive, and less outward looking – may require some other mechanism to ensure this
- Lose the independence and challenge of scrutiny as committees become 'owned' by directorates
- Become out of date quickly through regular directorate change
- Require finance and performance monitoring information to be aligned differently to how it is provided to the Executive and CMT.
- Does not guarantee a universal approach to scrutiny work planning or ensure a consistent level of corporate engagement.
- Result in Committee 2 – 'Adult Services & Public Health' being responsible for two of the main statutory scrutiny functions conferred on the Council by various Acts i.e. crime & disorder and health, which

would be time consuming based on the amount of associated overview and review work and the number of partners involved.

- The suggested split of Place Services would result in three Executive Members being required to attend meetings of the two Place Services Committees, with one of those having to report to both i.e. the Executive Member for Environment. This replicates the current situation with the Executive Member for Environment reporting to both the Economic Development & Transport Committee and the Communities & Environment Committee.

3. The advantages of this option over the current arrangements are:

- Officer clarity on which Committee they report to – ADs will be required to support one scrutiny committee only
- Scrutiny Committees and officers can establish a clear and consistent working relationship
- Senior officer support may be improved as they take more direct ownership
- Publicly transparent – easily understood reporting lines throughout organisation
- Better supports the new relationship between scrutiny committees and Executive members than the current arrangements, and may encourage more pro-active scrutiny i.e. more policy development work through closer working with Directorate management teams.