

Review of Scrutiny Function

Analysis of Option (iv) - New Structure – 1 Parent Committee & 3 Standing Committees with specific functional roles

Advantages

- Scrutiny committee members could choose which scrutiny committee to be on based on their individual skills i.e. developing policy or holding the Executive to account etc and not just on their interest in or knowledge of a particular subject e.g. education or health.
- Finance and performance monitoring information could be reported in line with how it is reported to the Executive and CMT.
- Allows for the new Executive/scrutiny working arrangements detailed in paragraph 7 of the report and would help promote more transparently opportunities for earlier effective policy development work.
- Would better support the earlier involvement of scrutiny members in pre-decision scrutiny, by virtue of the scrutiny committees being more explicit in their function.
- Would help to minimise the issues currently with corporate capacity as the scrutiny committees would better reflect the ongoing work of senior officers and the Executive. For example, by reflecting CMT/DMT workplans and developing policies and practices, and delivering improvements in services.
- Would enable scrutiny to focus on the way it works in a more coherent and strategic way, by streamlining the purpose of each committee to a specific scrutiny function.
- Would help focus review topics before proceeding i.e. the purpose of each scrutiny topic would need to be clearly identified in order to identify which would be the appropriate scrutiny committee to consider it.
- Would help address the recognised issues with the current Health Scrutiny committee as detailed in paragraph 23 of the report.
- Prevents silo working.
- Not affected by future changes to Executive Member portfolios or changes in directorates.
- Would encourage more ambitious recommendations and measurable outcomes.
- This option is in line with best practice scrutiny elsewhere (as detailed in previous reports).

- Delivery of the council's statutory scrutiny functions would be streamlined and improved through improved work planning and alignment with key council plans and strategies, and partnership working arrangements. This would help address the issues with the current Health Scrutiny Committee – see paragraphs 23 & 24 of report.

Disadvantages

- Senior officers would be required to attend more than one scrutiny committee as necessary, but not necessarily more meetings across the year.
- Because of the reduction in scrutiny committees, if committee membership remains at 7/8 members, not all non-Executive Members will be involved in Scrutiny. However a slight increase in committee membership (2 Committees with 9 and 2 Committees with 10) would address this.