

Scrutiny Arrangements

Summary

- 1 This report provides information about the Council's scrutiny arrangements. These are a key element of the Council's corporate governance arrangements which the Committee is entitled to monitor and to which reference is made in the annual governance statement.

Statutory requirements

- 2 The Council operates a Cabinet as opposed to a Committee structure for its executive decision making. It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2000 that executive arrangements must include provision for the appointment of at least one scrutiny committee with the power to review or scrutinise both executive and non executive decisions and to make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet or Council in respect of the discharge of those functions or on matters which affect the inhabitants of the area.
- 3 The Council has the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees which between them have the power to scrutinise and report in respect of these matters:
 - Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee
 - Learning and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Economic and City Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 4 Overview and scrutiny arrangements must make provision for executive decisions which have not yet been implemented to be referred back to the decision maker for reconsideration or for full Council to review the decision. The Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee fulfils this task through the call in arrangements.
 - 5 In addition to scrutiny focussing on the Council's responsibilities there are requirements that the Council have arrangements in place to scrutinise the work of partners in respect of their crime and disorder functions and in respect of health matters. The Community Safety and Health Scrutiny Committees respectively carry out these duties.
 - 6 The Council is obliged to appoint a Statutory Scrutiny Officer to promote and support the scrutiny function. The Head of Civic and Democratic Services performs that role.

Work undertaken by Scrutiny Committees

- 7 Each Committee is largely responsible for its own work plan. An annual work planning event was though instigated two years ago to enable all Members to put forward possible scrutiny topics. The Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee has the responsibility to oversee and co-ordinate the function. Thus the primary responsibility for ensuring effective scrutiny is taking place rests with that Committee.
- 8 Committees generally appoint task groups to undertake individual scrutiny reviews. Since the 2011 elections the following reviews have been concluded:

Title	When reported and outcome	Parent Committee
Admission arrangements and school transport policies	Reported April 2012. Recommendations accepted	L&C
E-Planning Review	Reported to Cabinet Dec 2012 referred to Cabinet Member who accepted 12 of 13	ECDOSC

	recommendations.	
York Museums Trust	Reported to Cabinet Jan 2013. Referred to Cabinet member. Recommendations accepted	L&C
Out of Hours Childcare	Reported to Cabinet March 2013. Recommendations accepted	ECDOSC
End of life care	Reported to Cabinet March 2013. Recommendations accepted	HOSC
City Centre Access	Report finalised February 2013. Reported to Cabinet Member 18 th April. Recommendations accepted.	CSMC
Sickness absence	Report finalised March 2013. Reported to Cabinet May 2013. Endorsed recommendations already implemented and approved remaining recommendations	CSMC
Youth Unemployment	Report finalised March 2013. Reported to Cabinet May 2013. Recommendations accepted	ECDOSC
Community Engagement	Report finalised May 2013. Reported to Cabinet June 2013. Recommendations accepted	CSMC
Libraries	Report finalised May 2013. Reported to Cabinet June 2013. Recommendations accepted	L&C

- 9 It is evident that there was a relatively slow start to reviews after the election but significant progress during the last Municipal Year. The terms of reference for the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee envisage that it will receive reports on the progress made by the other Scrutiny Committees against their work plans. This does not appear to have happened in a structured way. Members may wish to comment on this.
- 10 Each Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of recommendations arising from reviews within its remit and workplans suggest that this does happen.
- 11 In the same period since the local elections the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee has met on eight occasions as a call in Committee to consider ten decisions. No decisions have been referred back for reconsideration.

Relationship with Audit and Governance

- 12 Although the roles of Audit and Governance Committee and the Scrutiny Committees are distinct there is some degree of overlap – particularly with the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee. It is quite possible that one or other of the Committees could identify an issue that ought to be considered by the other. The Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees meet, informally from time to time to discuss matters of shared interest and it has now been agreed that the Chair of this Committee should be invited to join them.

Reviewing the Scrutiny arrangements

- 13 The Council's scrutiny arrangements were fundamentally reviewed four years ago when the former EMAP system was abolished. The Scrutiny Management Committee considered reports on developing scrutiny in December 2010 and February 2011. Council subsequently agreed to merging the Scrutiny Management and Effective Organisation Committees to form the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee.
- 14 Members are currently being consulted on their views as to how scrutiny can be further developed and it is anticipated that formal reports will come forward in due course.

Conclusion

- 15 This Committee's role is to satisfy itself that the governance arrangements of the Council are adequate. The Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee has primary responsibility for overseeing and co-ordinating the scrutiny function.
- 16 The Council has arrangements in place for scrutiny which meet the statutory requirements. Several scrutiny reviews have been undertaken which have resulted in meaningful recommendations. Those have largely been accepted by Cabinet. Call in arrangements exist and are used from time to time but have not resulted in decisions being referred back. The Council has kept its scrutiny arrangements under proactive review.
- 17 It is suggested that this indicates that the governance arrangements for scrutiny are adequate.

Corporate Priorities

- 18 Overview and Scrutiny forms an important component of the Council's corporate governance framework. As such it supports the overall aims and priorities of the Council by helping to make the Council a more effective organisation

Recommendation

- 19 Members are asked to:

(a) Note this report

Reason

So that the Committee is well informed when considering the annual governance statement.

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**Report
Approved**



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Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None