

CSMPS Committee's comments on Decision Making Arrangements

13. Consultation on Decision Making Arrangements

Consideration was given to the report of the Monitoring Office which set out proposed options for the policy and scrutiny committees to have the opportunity to debate and make recommendations on matters requiring an executive decision, prior to a final decision being taken. It was noted that the report would also form the basis of consultation with the Audit and Governance Committee, political groups and independent members.

Cllr Aspden and Officers outlined the proposals for pre decision scrutiny to allow for robust dialogue and greater transparency prior to decisions being taken. They gave details of the timescales and the issues involved, how urgent decisions could be taken and the proposal to end Officer in consultation decisions to improve openness and transparency. Member's views were sought on the new proposals to report back to the Executive at the end of August.

Members generally expressed their support for the new arrangements and made a number of comments including:

- Discipline would be required to make the new system work, with a time commitment from Members with more frequent meetings
- General support for CSMC to be made up largely of Chairs of scrutiny committees
- Support for revision of scrutiny committee remits
- Some opposition to Chairs/Vice Chair operating as a filter for member requests
- Allowing at least 2 weeks notice to "call-in" a decision was considered too long
- The costs of moving to a monthly cycle of meetings were requested as without sufficient resources, this would not be possible
- No support for referral of urgent decisions to Staffing Matters & Urgency which was not a scrutiny committee
- Need to build in capacity for Officer engagement
- Noted that the Budget amendment to Council included additional funds for governance and democracy support
- Support for Officers reviewing the use of the urgency process periodically

- Any new system needed to be simple, efficient and understandable and have the support of all members
- Support for replicating post decision call-in of decisions by 3 members
- Support for CSMC oversight of Executive reports
- Highlighted that scrutiny was a member responsibility and, in order to work, it would require member engagement

The Chair thanked all Members and Officers for their contributions which would be taken account, prior to a decision being taken at the Executive meeting in August.