

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - MONDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2023

Report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources

SCRUTINY PANELS

Purpose of the Report

To review the progression of scrutiny Panels.

Actions Requested

1. To review the progression of scrutiny Panels.
2. To consider the scrutiny Panel suggestions made at the scrutiny workshop held on 31st August 2023. The Commission needs to decide whether to approve the establishment of Panels, to add ideas to the list of suggested Panels for later consideration, to eliminate panel ideas or if a briefing is required.
3. To appoint Chair and a Vice Chair of scrutiny Panels.

Reasons

1-3. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny and enable panel work to commence.

Scrutiny Panel ideas

A Scrutiny Panels workshop was held on 31st August 2023 for all non-executive members of the Council. The purpose of the workshop was to allow members to develop further understanding of the scrutiny panels processes, to understand the topical issues at the Council, to review some examples of good scrutiny and to generate some ideas for scrutiny panels. Members suggested the following ideas;

1. Utilising Council assets (garages) - Information required would include the number of void garages in the Borough, whether they were in use and opportunities for re-purposing. It was highlighted that an assets report was being considered at the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 12th September.
2. Housing Needs – Investigation of the effectiveness of the current Housing Register and whether the process could be streamlined. Suggestion of whether a separate list could be created for residents that require adapted properties.
3. Public Transport – To tie in with Net Zero by 2030 aims. Investigation into whether better public transport links could be provided between villages and surrounding areas.

4. Climate Change and Emergency – Suggested that a Panel consider reviewing elements of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan or the Government funding available to the Council. It was highlighted that members would receive a briefing on the new Climate Change Strategy on 27th September 2023. It would be beneficial for members to make a decision on this scrutiny panel after the briefing when more information on this was made available.
5. Dementia Friendly Council – To look at how the Council can improve provision of services to those with Dementia and their carers.
6. Loneliness – This could be linked to the dementia friendly idea, or form a separate Panel.
7. HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation) – To look at areas where HMOs are over the 20% limit and/or the parking permit issues when a house is converted into flats (more parking permits). Also to review student accommodation requirements.
8. Brownfield Sites – To look at whether there was a brownfield site register, to see how often registers are updated and to map the areas of brownfield sites.
9. Litter picking – To look at litter picking around the Borough and to try to encourage local participation in litter picking.
10. Tackling Substance Misuse – To look at how the Council could better support partners to tackle and improve substance misuse across the Borough.

Budget Scrutiny Panel

At their meeting on 7th August 2023, the Scrutiny Commission approved a Budget Scrutiny Panel for 2023-24, with Councillor Mark Charles as Chair of the Panel. Meetings of the Budget Scrutiny Panel have been scheduled on 24th October, 12th December and 3rd January, and expression of interest for membership are being sought.

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Panels

Background Papers: None

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