

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 12TH OCTOBER 2020

Report of the Head of Strategic Support

ITEM 6 REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY FUNCTION ARISING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Purpose of Report

To enable the Commission to review the scrutiny function arrangements put in place on the advice of the Centre for Public Governance and Scrutiny (CfPGS) in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Actions Requested

That the Commission determines whether to continue with the suspension of the current cycle of directorate-based Scrutiny Committee meetings and Scrutiny Panel work, with a further review date.

Reason

To ensure that Council resources are focussed in the most appropriately.

Background

The CfPGS in its review of how scrutiny should work during the COVID crisis suggested that Councils should focus on aspects related to the Covid-19 pandemic, including responses and recovery efforts. As a result, at its meeting on 1st June 2020, the Commission resolved to focus on the following:

- A single substantive agenda item for each meeting to concentrate on one of the Council's recovery cells; organisational recovery, economic recovery and community recovery,
- A strengthened relationship between the Scrutiny Commission and the Audit Committee (meetings between the Chair of the Scrutiny Commission and the Chair of the Audit Committee scheduled regularly).
- The use of 'Questions under Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.16' as set out in the Constitution.
- The ordinary pre-decision scrutiny of scheduled Cabinet items.

As such the current cycle of directorate-based Scrutiny Committee meetings and Scrutiny Panel work was suspended for six months until 30th November 2020. It is therefore timely for the Commission to consider how it wishes to proceed taking into account the continued uncertainty regarding the impact of the Pandemic, the timeframe for recovery and the level of Council resources required to re-start the full complement of scrutiny meetings and panels..

It is worth noting that at this stage, the Commission has received an update on all three of the Recovery Cells.

Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

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