

## COUNCIL – 26TH APRIL 2021

### Report of the Scrutiny Commission

#### ITEM 6.3 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

##### Purpose of Report

To present proposals for a new scrutiny committee structure.

Note: the executive, regulatory and governance committees of the Council would be unchanged.

##### Recommendations

1. That the current scrutiny committee structure set out in the Constitution be replaced with the following committees as from the commencement of the 2021/22 civic year:
  - Scrutiny Commission (consisting of 7 members selected on a politically balanced basis, quorum to be 4 members),
  - Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee (consisting of 9 members selected on a politically balanced basis, quorum to be 5 members).
2. That the overall areas of responsibility for each of the new scrutiny committees be as summarised in Part B of the report of the Monitoring Officer (attached as Annex).
3. That delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution that may be required.
4. That it be noted that the Monitoring Officer will request that the Independent Remuneration Panel consider the special responsibility allowances for the Chair and Vice-chairs of the two committees, and that appropriate recommendations will then be made to Council to amend the Scheme of Member Allowances accordingly.

##### Reasons

- 1 - 3. To implement a new scrutiny committee structure following the review that has been undertaken.
4. To ensure that the Scheme of Member Allowances is kept up to date and relevant.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

At its meeting on 8 th March 2021, the Scrutiny Commission considered a report of the Head of Strategic Support setting out proposals for a new

scrutiny committee structure for recommendation to full Council. A copy of that report is attached as an Annex.

The following minute extract details the Commission's consideration of the matter:

**"134. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

*A report of the Head of Strategic Support to present proposals for amendments to the Scrutiny Committee structure, to enable the Scrutiny Commission to make recommendations to full Council (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).*

*The Democratic Services Manager assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:*

- i. Concerns were raised that the reduction in scrutiny committees within the Council would mean a reduction in quality scrutiny. It was highlighted that a good level of scrutiny would continue at the Council, as the scrutiny panels commissioned would continue, with a total of four at any one time, to include the Budget Scrutiny Panel. It was recognised that the work of scrutiny panels and the recommendations developed had been valuable in the past.*
- ii. It was acknowledged that the Scrutiny Commission had been operating with seven members for a number of years and that this had worked well in order to deliver a good level of scrutiny. It was considered that there was not a need to increase the number of members on the Scrutiny Commission.*
- iii. It was considered that the proposal of 15 members sitting on the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee in option two was too great and may result in unmanageable meetings. It was also acknowledged that this committee would potentially cover a substantial amount of work. It was suggested that a total of nine members would work well in a Committee of this nature.*
- iv. It was suggested that following Council approval of the Scrutiny Commission's preference in the revised Committee structure on 26th April 2021, a workshop be scheduled to allow members of the Commission to develop and align their work programme to reflect the new scrutiny structure. This would then be reported back into the Scrutiny Commission for transparency.*
- v. It was acknowledged that the Scrutiny Commission had provided a good level of scrutiny, including pre-decision scrutiny, and a full work programme throughout the pandemic and that this was appreciated by the Cabinet and the Council in general.*

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That it be recommended to Council that, with effect from the 2021/22 civic year:*

1a. *The Scrutiny Committee structure be amended to consist of the following two standing scrutiny committees, with the responsibilities, functions and membership as set out in Appendix B, with the amendment that membership of the respective committees:*

- *Scrutiny Commission (Membership 7)*
  - *Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee (Membership 9);*
- and

1b. *Delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution that may be required.*

2. *That it be noted that the Monitoring Officer will request that the Independent Remuneration Panel consider the special responsibility allowances for the Chair and Vice-chairs of the two committees, and that appropriate recommendations will then be made to Council to amend the Scheme of Member Allowances accordingly.*

3. *That a workshop be scheduled following the Council meeting on 26th April 2021 to allow members of the Scrutiny Commission to develop and align their work programme to reflect the new scrutiny structure. This would then be reported back into the Scrutiny Commission for transparency.*

### Reasons

1. *To amend the Scrutiny structure following the review that has been undertaken.*
2. *To ensure that the Scheme of Member Allowances is kept up to date and relevant.*
3. *To ensure the work programmes of the newly established scrutiny committees were appropriate for the delivery of good scrutiny.”*

### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

As set out in the recommendations, the changes would take effect from the start of the 2021/22 civic year. If adopted, details of the new structure would be submitted to the Independent Remuneration Panel for it to consider Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chair and Vice-chair positions.

### Report Implications

As detailed in Annex.

Background Papers:           None.

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Annexes

Annex Report of the Head of Strategic Support considered by the  
Scrutiny Commission