

To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 05 July 2022
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Scrutiny Committee Standing Panel and Review Group Arrangements 2022/23

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To agree standing panel and review group arrangements for the 2022/23 municipal year
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Dr Chris Smowton, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Priority:	All
Recommendation(s): That the Committee resolves to:	
1.	Agree to establish a Climate & Environment Panel, noting that the remit, proposed business and meeting dates will be agreed at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting.
2.	Agree a Chair (or lead member) for the Climate & Environment Panel.
3.	Agree the membership level (4) of the Climate & Environment Panel and invite nominations for membership from political groups, to be agreed at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting.
4.	Agree to establish a Budget Review Group, comprising the membership of the Finance & Performance Panel, noting that the proposed scope will be agreed at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting.
5.	Agree that the Chair of the Finance & Performance Panel will Chair the Budget Review Group.
6.	Suggest topics for an additional review group focused on a priority topic of the Committee's choosing.

Introduction and Background

1. At its meeting on 08 June 2022, the Scrutiny Committee agreed its Operating Principles for the 2022/23 municipal year. The Operating Principles state that, in any given year, the organisation ordinarily has capacity to support either:
 - a. 2 Standing Panels and 3 Review Groups; or

- b. 3 Standing Panels and 2 Review Groups
2. As set out in the Scrutiny Operating Principles, standing panels hold meetings throughout the year and consider quarterly performance reports, Executive decisions and other issues within their remit. Review groups are formed to undertake issue-led and time-bound 'task and finish' reviews of specific issues, before concluding their work with a report and recommendations, usually to Cabinet. Standing panels and review groups are governed by the Operating Principles and are not held as committee or sub-committee meetings under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972.
3. The Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish two Standing Panels for the 2022/23 municipal year:
 - a. Housing & Homelessness Panel
 - b. Finance & Performance Panel

Companies Scrutiny Panel Arrangements

4. Due to recommended changes in the way that Companies Scrutiny Panel operates, namely that Companies Scrutiny Panel will join Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) meetings as non-voting members to enable more effective and efficient scrutiny of the shareholder function, there is capacity within the Scrutiny function for other things. There are a total of six simultaneous meetings of the SJVG and Companies Scrutiny Panel scheduled which will not be clerked by the Scrutiny Officer, therefore there is additional capacity within the Scrutiny function for six meetings throughout the year.
5. On 08 June 2022, the Scrutiny Committee agreed that one of these six meetings be given over for the purpose of Scrutiny-commissioned reports relating to Council companies; therefore capacity for five meetings remains. It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Committee will have capacity for an additional review group focused on a priority topic of the Committee's choosing.
6. It is recommended that members of the Committee suggest review group topics for consideration. The work of this additional review group would likely commence in the New Year.

Budget Review Group

7. Each year, the Scrutiny Committee ordinarily establishes a Budget Review Group to examine the Council's budget proposals for the next financial year, which helps ensure good financial governance practices.
8. It is recommended that the Committee agrees to establish a Budget Review Group for the 2022/23 municipal year to examine the Council's budget proposals for 2023/24 and that the proposed scope be presented at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting for agreement.
9. Given the Finance & Performance Panel's involvement in scrutinising the Council's finances, it is recommended that the membership of the Budget Review Group should comprise the membership of the Finance & Performance Panel; including that the Chair of the Finance & Performance Panel should Chair the Budget Review Group:

- *Cllr James Fry (Chair); Cllr Chris Jarvis; Cllr Tom Landell Mills; Cllr Amar Latif*

Standing Panel Proposal: Climate & Environment

10. At its meeting on 08 June 2022, it was suggested that a Climate & Environment Panel be established. It is recommended that the Committee agrees to establish a Climate & Environment Panel and that the remit, proposed business and meeting dates be presented at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting for agreement.
11. If the Committee is minded to establish a Climate & Environment Panel, it will be required to agree a Chair (lead member). The Committee would also be required to invite nominations for membership from political groups, to be agreed at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting. It is recommended that a membership level of four is agreed.

Agreeing the Draft Scope/Remit

12. It is proposed that the draft scope/remit of review groups and standing panels will be presented at a future Scrutiny Committee meeting for agreement.

Appointment of Members and Chair

13. The rules around membership of standing panels and review groups are governed by the Scrutiny Operating Principles agreed by the Committee at the start of the municipal year.
14. Standing panels and review groups will use the following cross-party guide for the appointment of members:
 - 4 members: 2 Labour, 1 Lib Dem, 1 Green
 - 6 members: 3 Labour, 2 Lib Dem, 1 Green
15. Members of standing panels and review groups may be any non-executive member; they are not required to be members of the Scrutiny Committee or any of its panels.
16. Although standing panel and review group membership is not required to be drawn from the Scrutiny Committee, the importance of the Chair's role as a bridge between the standing panel/review group and the Committee means that it is preferable that they be a member of the Scrutiny Committee.

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