

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**DATE:** 18 March 2021

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

#### **PROPOSED SCRUTINY PANEL STRUCTURE**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To seek the Committee's formal endorsement of the proposed new panel structure for Overview & Scrutiny at Slough Borough Council.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

That the Committee recommend to Full Council:

(a) to amend the constitution at Article 6 and Part 4.5 as required to amend the terms of reference of the scrutiny sub-committees

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Overview & Scrutiny plays an important role in scrutinising the progress made in the delivery of all aspects of the SJWS.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Overview & Scrutiny is central to ensuring accountability in the delivery of all five priority outcomes of the Five Year Plan.

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful
- Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs
- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay
- Our residents will live in good quality homes
- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives quarterly reports on the council's progress against the Key Performance Indicators identified against these priority outcomes.

#### 4. **Other Implications**

##### (a) Financial

These proposals are made under the assumption that overview & scrutiny will receive the same level of support as is currently provided, and therefore will not require additional funding.

##### (b) Risk Management

None.

##### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented.

The requirement for local authorities in England to establish overview and scrutiny committees is set out in sections 9F to 9FI of the Local Government Act.

Current overview and scrutiny legislation recognises that authorities are democratically-elected bodies who are best-placed to determine which overview and scrutiny arrangements best suit their own individual needs, and so gives them a great degree of flexibility to decide which arrangements to adopt.

The council's current Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Constitution, Part 4.5), includes provision for co-opted education representatives to sit and vote on education related matters and to be non voting members for other related functions. The current procedure will be reviewed to ensure that the legislative requirements to have co-opted members scrutinising education matters will remain in place, notwithstanding that the scrutiny panel will cover a wider range of areas.

Any changes to Article 6 and Part 4.5 of the constitution will require approval of full council. It is proposed to take a report to annual council to amend the constitution at the same time as appointing members to the committee. Officers will work with the member constitution working group on suggested amendments to the constitution to facilitate the recommended changes.

##### (d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has not been completed. The new structure will align better with the new structure of the organisation under the Our Futures programme, which should allow scrutiny the opportunity to examine equalities issues effectively across all areas of the council's operations.

#### 5. **Supporting Information**

The Joint Cabinet Scrutiny Working Group has over the last six months reviewed the balance and remit of the four scrutiny panels. Drawing on the LGA Governance Peer Review, and previous sessions with members, the Group identified a number of challenges which needed to be addressed:

- Out of date terms of reference.
- A significant imbalance in workloads between panels.
- Duplication in the scrutiny of some policy areas.
- The lack of a clear home for other policy areas – such as employment and skills.
- The need to reflect the new organisational structure and the council's current areas of strategic focus.

The new structure proposed by the joint working group retains the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which would be underpinned by three new panels: People, Customer & Community and Place. Details of the policy areas which fall under the remit of these panels is included in Appendix A.

The proposed structure was discussed with the current members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the three sub panels, at a workshop on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

Although it is not part of the scrutiny structure, the role of Audit & Corporate Governance Committee is relevant to the review of scrutiny as part of the same wider assurance framework which provides check and challenge to the authority. It has also been discussed that to avoid duplication with Overview & Scrutiny and free up space on scrutiny work programmes, the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee could play a greater role in scrutinising the performance of major contracts and commissioning processes.

## 6. **Comments of Other Committees**

This report is yet to be seen by any other Committee.

## 7. **Conclusion**

This report provides an update on the proposed new Overview & Scrutiny panel structure.

## 8. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Proposed Scrutiny Structure

## 9. **Background Papers**

Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities. May 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-and-combined-authorities/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-and-combined-authorities>