

## **Overview and Scrutiny Board – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

### **Introduction of Working Groups**

At its meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 the Board agreed to set up 2 working groups to consider Finance and Budgetary matters and the Performance Dashboard. The information below was provided to Members when reaching this decision. Officers recommend that each group consists of no more than 5 Members. Terms of Reference for each working group will be discussed at the first meetings and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for its consideration. Regular updates will also be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Board together with any areas which the working groups suggest would warrant further investigation by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The introduction of working groups will inevitably impact on the workload of officers who support the Overview and Scrutiny Board. It should be noted that those officers also support other Committees and services provided by Democratic Services.

Currently, the Board has the capacity for 2 task groups and/short sharp reviews to run concurrently at any one time. In 2015/16 task group/short sharp review work has been limited to only one being completed; in 2014/15 a total of 3 were completed. In fact 3 per year is the average when looking back over previous years. The introduction of working groups will therefore replace one task group/short sharp review, though in reality this would have limited impact on the output from the Overview and Scrutiny board during the year.

The introduction of the working groups would enhance the work of the Board and allow for them to concentrate on specific areas of scrutiny and for the work programme to become more focused. Major items on an agenda could be limited to 2, for example, thereby providing an opportunity for more detailed questioning to take place. There could potentially also be a small financial saving to this arrangement as there is a special allowance paid to the Chairman of a task group.

#### **1. Finance and Budget Working Group**

- A working group of a small number of Members of the Board.
- The Working Group could meet in private to consider finance and budgetary matters throughout the year rather than just before the budget is set.
- This would enable Members on the Working Group to develop expertise in terms of local government finances and to dedicate time to investigating particular areas in detail.
- To make it easier to arrange meetings Officers would suggest it might be worth limiting membership to 5 members of the Board.
- Meetings could be convened at times that would enable scrutiny Members to pre-scrutinise details before any decision is made by Cabinet.

- Key findings and recommendations could be reported back by the Chairman of the Working Group to the Board.
- Recommendations proposed through this process would have an evidence basis and would enhance informed decision making at the Council.

## 2. Performance Dashboard Working Group

- A working group of a small number of Members.
- The working group could meet throughout the year to monitor performance data on the dashboard.
- The group might want to focus on different areas of the dashboard, perhaps in accordance with each strategic purpose, via a set work programme.
- This would enable Members of the Working Group to develop expertise in respect of using the dashboard and have some influence over the areas/measures covered within the dashboard.
- The Working Group could also highlight any areas of concern about service performance and, where considered appropriate, report back to the Board which could lead to a variety of outcomes (a presentation to the Board, a Task Group etc.)
- Recommendations could also be reported back to the Cabinet via the Board by the Chairman of the Working Group.
- This Working Group could help the Council to address the role that Overview and Scrutiny has to play in respect of performance management from a best practice perspective.

**Members are asked to determine membership of each working group, together with the appointment of a lead Member for each.**

Amanda Scarce & Jess Bayley  
Democratic Services Officers

11<sup>th</sup> May 2016