

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – COMMENTS TO OSM RE WAYS OF WORKING REPORT

### Summary

Councillors Gollop, Alexander, English and Negus, as the lead Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, met on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018 to consider the draft Ways of Working report and agree areas of consensus. Their detailed findings are listed below, but the headline recommendations are as follows;

1. That 'Option C' in the attached Ways of Working report be the recommended model with the exception that scrutiny of the budget/MTFP be passed from OSM to the Resources Committee. The revised model is set out below.

*Option C – Departmental Alignment (based on the new draft staff structure)*

<b>OSMB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 meetings per year</li> <li>• Responsibility includes Corporate Risk Register and Performance</li> <li>• Responsibility for overall scrutiny work programme</li> </ul>			
<b>Growth &amp; Regeneration Scrutiny Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 meetings per year</li> <li>- Commissions its own T&amp;F group/s</li> </ul>	<b>Communities Scrutiny Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 meetings per year</li> <li>- Commissions its own T&amp;F group/s</li> </ul>	<b>Care &amp; Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 meetings per year</li> <li>- Health Sub-committee meets 4 times per year</li> <li>- Commissions its own T&amp;F group/s</li> </ul>	<b>Resources Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 meetings per year</li> <li>- Has 1 x Budget/MTFP related T&amp;F Group</li> </ul>

### Key features:

- 22 formal meetings
- Up to 5 T&Fs over the course of the year (including Budget/MTFP) to be commissioned between OSMB, Growth & Regeneration Committee, Communities Committee and Care & Safeguarding Committee (\*\*See note after option D)
- Mechanisms included for Children and Safeguarding issues (via Care & Safeguarding Committee)
- Regular public scrutiny
- Formal public scrutiny shared between six committees, not solely with OSMB

## **Key Findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Lead Members;**

1. The Task and Finish pilot had led to some effective scrutiny, particularly by enabling deep dives into particular subject areas, however, this had led to a reduction in overview type scrutiny activity which would need to be addressed in any model operating in the longer term.
2. Scrutiny (and the Council as a whole) was operating with reduced resources and that needed to be reflected in the chosen model going forward.
3. The primary purpose of Scrutiny was to hold the Executive to account, but the current Cabinet structure could not be effectively mirrored due to the cross nature of portfolios and any potential changes to Cabinet responsibilities. It would make more sense for Scrutiny to base its model on the City Council directorates.
4. Scrutiny of the budget and MTFP should sit with the Resources Scrutiny Commission since those Members had the appropriate financial expertise, which would bring added value.
5. Monitoring the performance of the Council was an important function of Scrutiny and therefore additional consideration should be given to the appropriate mechanism for this, including the selection of Key Performance Indicators etc. A workshop specifically to review this area was recommended.
6. OSM should retain control of the Scrutiny Work Programme but the Commission/Task and Finish Chairs should have more of a role in managing priorities and this would be best enabled through regular informal meetings (i.e. 'Leads meetings'). The existing arrangement of Scrutiny Commission/Task and Finish chairs sitting on OSM should be continued.
7. The fluid approach to membership of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups had presented challenges. In future Task and Finish Group membership should be politically proportionate with appointments made by the Whips.
8. The situation regarding remuneration for Scrutiny Commission/Task and Finish Groups Chairs/Vice Chairs needed to be considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel once the final Scrutiny structure had been agreed.
9. Members had an important role in keeping a 'watching brief' on relevant areas, but Scrutiny should not be used as a way of briefing Members thus taking up valuable time in meetings and often excluding other Members who could be interested.
10. Any future Task and Finish Groups should be carefully planned before commencement so that the objectives and timetable were clear; only those that had a tight remit and purpose should be taken forward with other topics taking a more traditional scrutiny route. Some of the Task and Finish Groups selected for the pilot had ill-defined remits and were therefore never likely to deliver significant outcomes.