



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

General Purposes Committee

Date: 18 May 2010

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny – Proposed Changes to Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. Since the publication of the agenda for General Purposes Committee, to be held on 18th May 2010, the Labour Group has indicated that it wishes to put before Committee an alternative structure.
2. Whilst agreeing with all the amendments identified in paragraph 2.2 of the original report, the Labour Group propose that the number of Scrutiny Boards be reduced to six. It is proposed that this is achieved by deleting Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships).
3. The Labour Group is also mindful to recommend to Council that the 'no substitute Member' rule for Scrutiny Board meetings be rescinded.
4. The General Purposes Committee is requested to consider the proposed reduction in the number of Scrutiny Boards and the proposal to allow substitutes at Scrutiny Board meetings and recommend approval to Council.

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Labour Group's alternative proposals for the arrangement of Overview and Scrutiny.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The published agenda for the meeting of General Purposes Committee on 18th May includes a report detailing changes to Article 6 of the Constitution, the Scrutiny Boards' Terms of Reference and the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules. These changes are either to ensure consistency in wording, to reflect legislative changes or to provide procedural clarity.
- 2.2 The published report also reflects the Administration's wish to retain the existing seven Scrutiny Boards. Since the publication of the agenda the Labour Group has indicated that it wishes to put before Committee an alternative structure. Whilst agreeing with all the amendments identified in paragraph 2.2 of the original report, the Labour Group propose that the number of Scrutiny Boards be reduced to six. It is proposed that this is achieved by deleting City and Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Board.
- 2.3 Each Scrutiny Board under existing terms of reference have the ability to scrutinise partnerships and also outside bodies.
- 2.4 It is also proposed that the current rule of not allowing substitutes at Scrutiny Board meetings be rescinded.

3.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 3.1 The Council's Scrutiny arrangements are one of the key parts of the Council's governance arrangements. This review of the Constitution seeks to ensure that the arrangements continue to be efficient and relevant to the work of the Council.

4.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications to the proposed amendments. The reduction of one Scrutiny Board will generate a saving of £20,040.42 in Members' Allowance.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 The General Purposes Committee is requested to recommend to Council that:
- The Council designates the post of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development, as its Scrutiny Officer in accordance with Section 21ZA of the Local Government Act 2000.
 - Six Scrutiny Board are retained
 - The Constitutional amendments as detailed in appendix 1 -3 of the published report on this agenda be approved and that any further consequential amendments to Article Six and the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules as a result of reducing the number of Scrutiny Boards be made.
 - Substitutes are permitted for all Scrutiny Board meetings

Background Papers - None used.