



Epping Forest District Council

SCRUTINY PANELS REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL **Monday, 20th October, 2014**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Scrutiny Panels Review Task and Finish Panel**, which will be held at:

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
on **Monday, 20th October, 2014**
at **7.00 pm** .

Glen Chipp
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer**

Stephen Tautz (01992), Governance Directorate
email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel:
01992 564180

Members:

Councillors K Angold-Stephens (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs M Sartin,
D Stallan and Mrs J H Whitehouse

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Director of Governance) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Director of Governance). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a

matter.

4. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 4)

To agree the notes of the meeting of the Panel held on 29 September 2014.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 5 - 8)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the terms of reference of the Panel. These are attached, together with a proposed work programme for the review of the scrutiny panel structure. The Panel are asked at each meeting to review both documents.

6. SCRUTINY PANEL REVIEW - STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK AND CONSULTATION (Pages 9 - 26)

(Director of Governance) To consider the attached report..

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings of the Panel will be held at 7.00pm on the following dates:

25 November 2014

20 January 2015

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF SCRUTINY PANELS REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2014
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.00 PM**

Members Present: K Angold-Stephens (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan (Housing Portfolio Holder) and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: Mrs A Grigg (Asset Management and Economic Development Portfolio Holder)

Officers Present S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager) and G. Nicholas (National Management Trainee)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs. A. Grigg.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs. M. Sartin be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

4. SCOPE OF REVIEW AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were reminded that, at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 February 2014, the establishment of the Task and Finish Panel to review the structure of the existing framework of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panels, had been agreed.

A review of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements had been undertaken in 2013/14 and the new management structure had been finalised in December 2013, resulting in a reduction from seven service directorates to four. A proposal for a suggested new scrutiny panel structure aligned to each of the directorates, which had not been considered as part of the overview and scrutiny review, had been deferred by the Committee in February 2014 for further consideration.

The Panel considered draft terms of reference for the review and welcomed Gareth Nicholas (National Management Trainee), who was leading the officer support for the review during his initial six-month placement with the Council. Members noted that the review was only to address the possible future structure of the scrutiny panel

framework and that wider constitutional aspects (unless the Panel identified any matters that affected the constitution) and the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself, were excluded from the scope of the review exercise, having already been considered by the earlier review.

In undertaking the review, Members intended to gather evidence and information from relevant stakeholders, and agreed to invite the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of each of the existing scrutiny panels to attend the next meeting to discuss the operation of the current framework. In the meantime, officers would also seek the views of service directors in relation to the review and identify options for a future framework in discussion with other local authorities and representative organisations.

The changes to the management structure of the Council also presented the Panel with an opportunity to consider the workloads of the existing scrutiny panels. Members therefore agreed that some comparison of the terms of reference of each panel should be undertaken as part of the review, in order to ensure that panels have balanced and achievable work programmes. The review was also to consider appropriate scrutiny arrangements for some elements of the functions of the Governance Directorate and how these interrelated with the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Standards Committee, as this was an area of concern expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the directorate-aligned proposal had been considered earlier in the year. The Panel intended to discuss these matters with the Chairmen of the Audit and Governance and Standards Committees. The Panel also wished to consult with all members in relation to the review and would report progress with regard to the review to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

The review was due for completion in February 2015 to allow time for a final report to be considered by the Committee and the Council during March/April 2015, with a view to the agreement of any necessary constitutional changes and the introduction of the preferred Overview and Scrutiny Panel structure at the commencement of the next municipal year.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to agree the proposed terms of reference and scope for the Panel's review of the structure of the existing of overview and scrutiny panel framework.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**RESOLVED:**

That future meetings of the Panel be held at 7.00pm on the following dates:

20 October 2014
25 November 2014
20 January 2015

Origin

At its meeting on 25 February 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the establishment of a new Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel to review the structure of the Council's existing framework of overview and scrutiny standing panels, and to make recommendations for how any new structure could best complement the new management structure of the Council.

Draft Terms of Reference

To review the current structure of the overview and scrutiny panel framework, taking into consideration the report of the recent overview and scrutiny review and how any future panel framework would best fit the management structure of the Council;

(1) To specifically consider whether the Council should:

- retain the current five-panel structure; or
- move to a panel structure based around the new directorate responsibilities (i.e. have four panels instead of five); or
- move towards a commissioning model based upon a work programme;

(2) To consider options for any other panel structure deemed appropriate;

(3) To review the workload and terms of reference of each of the existing scrutiny panels for relevance and consider how their processes could be improved;

(4) To consider how any future scrutiny panel established to review relevant functions of the Governance Directorate would interrelate with the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Standards Committee; and

(5) To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on options for a new scrutiny panel framework to be implemented from the 2015/16 municipal year.

Aims and Objectives

- (a) To report findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to submit a final report for consideration by the Committee and the Council by the end of March 2015;
- (b) To gather evidence and information in relation to the review through the receipt of appropriate data, presentations and by participation in fact-finding visits to other authorities if necessary;
- (c) To have due regard to relevant legislation and the Council's procedures;
- (d) To consult political groups and independent Councillors during the review process;

REVIEW OF SCRUTINY PANELS TASK AND FINISH PANEL: TERMS OF REFERENCE

TIMESCALE	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
Commencement:	First meeting to be held on 29 September 2014	29 September 2014
<u>Finish</u>	End of year 31 March 2015	

Overview & Scrutiny Panels Review Panel (Chairman – Cllr. K. Angold-Stephens)

2014/15

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Meetings
(1) Agree terms of reference and scope of review;	Terms of reference and scope of review agreed by Panel (29 September 2014) and Overview & Scrutiny Committee (14 October 2014);	Achieved	20 October 2014 25 November 2014 20 January 2015
(2) Consider views of chairmen and vice-chairmen of existing scrutiny panels and the Audit & Governance Committee, and service directors/lead officers, on the operation of the current framework;	By October 2014;	Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of existing scrutiny panels and the Audit & Governance Committee invited to attend meeting on 20 October 2014. Discussions being held with service directors/lead officers for report to same meeting;	
(3) Review workloads of existing scrutiny panels;	By November 2014;	Terms of reference of existing scrutiny panels to be reviewed at 25 November 2014 meeting;	
(4) Consider report of options for future panel structure;	Options to be developed;	Options to be considered by the Panel in November 2014;	
(5) Undertake appropriate stakeholder consultation	Consultation to be held with all members and relevant stakeholders;	Consultation to be completed by January 2015;	
(6) Final proposals, including training requirements, to be considered by February 2015.	Introduction of preferred structure at the commencement of 2015/16 municipal year.	Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (10 February 2015) and Council (19 February 2015).	

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Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel

Date of meeting: 20 October 2014

SCRUTINY



Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Panel Review – Stakeholder Feedback and Consultation

Officer contact for further information: Gareth Nicholas (01992 564166)

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Panel

- (a) discuss the operation of the current scrutiny panel framework with the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the present overview and scrutiny panels;**
- (b) consider feedback on the operation of the present framework arising from interviews held with service directors and lead officers of the current panels; and**
- (c) consider options for a facilitated scrutiny workshop as part of the review of the scrutiny panel framework.**

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 29 September 2014, the Task and Finish Panel asked officers to provide the following information for this Panel meeting:
 - Information on options for a facilitated scrutiny workshop;
 - Information gathered as a result of consultations held with service directors and lead officers; and
 - Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Audit & Governance Committee to engage in consultations relevant to the review

Background Information

2. A review of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements was undertaken in 2013/14. The Council's service directorates have recently been restructured, resulting in a change of seven directorates to four. A proposal for a suggested new overview and scrutiny panel structure was considered on 25 February 2014 at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. Details of this proposal and the current panel structure are attached to this report.
3. This review being undertaken by the Panel only concerns the future structure of the scrutiny panel framework. Wider constitutional aspects and a review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself are excluded from the review. The changes to the directorate structure give the opportunity to look at the balance of the terms of reference of the existing panels.

Report:

4. At the request of the Panel, invitations have been issued to each of the chairmen and

vice-chairmen of the present overview and scrutiny panels to attend this meeting, to take part in discussions regarding the operation of the existing panel framework and options for any future structure. At the time of the finalisation of this agenda, confirmed attendance had been received from Councillor S. Murray (Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel) and Councillor Y. Knight (Vice-Chairman of the Planning Services Scrutiny Panel). The Chairman of the Constitution and Members Services Scrutiny Panel, Councillor M. Sartin, is an existing member of this Task and Finish Panel and it is hoped that other relevant chairmen and vice-chairmen will be able to attend the meeting.

5. The review is also to consider appropriate scrutiny arrangements for some elements of the functions of the Governance Directorate and how these interrelate with the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee, as this was an area of concern expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the directorate-aligned proposal was considered earlier in the year. Unfortunately, the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee has advised that he will not be able to attend either this or the next meeting. In the circumstances, it will be necessary to make other arrangements to secure the views of the Chairman of that Committee.
6. As agreed at the previous meeting, discussion on the review has also taken place, or is scheduled to take place, with service directors and relevant lead officers of the present scrutiny panels, including discussions with:
 - Colleen O'Boyle (Director of Governance)
 - Alan Hall (Director of Communities)
 - Derek Macnab (Director of Resources)
 - Bob Palmer (Director of Resources)
 - Simon Hill (Assistant Director - Governance & Performance Management)
 - Peter Maddock (Assistant Director - Accountancy)
 - Nigel Richardson (Assistant Director - Development Management)
7. At the finalisation of this agenda, four discussions had taken place and the feedback arising from these sessions is attached. The results of the remaining interviews will be reported at the meeting.
8. The Panel has also previously agreed that there might be merit in holding a facilitated workshop for all Members to attend, as part of the review of the scrutiny panel framework. This could be facilitated by Tim Young, an independent Scrutiny and Policy Consultant who has previously worked with the Council on overview and scrutiny matters. Mr. Young has prepared the attached outline of the possible aims, objectives and outcomes for a workshop session, for consideration by the Panel.

Recommendations:

9. The Panel is asked at this meeting:
 - (a) To hold discussions with the chairmen and vice-chairmen of the overview and scrutiny panels;
 - (b) To consider information gathered as a result of discussions held with service directors and relevant lead officers; and
 - (c) To consider the proposal of a facilitated workshop with consultant Tim Young.

Current Structure of Panels

Panel	Current Responsibilities	Directors reporting under new structure
Constitution and Members Services	Constitution, Civic matters, elections, governance, services for members	Governance Resources (for CSO's) CEO/CIA (elections/Audit)
Finance and Performance Management	KPI's, performance and outturns, public consultation and engagement, draft portfolio holder budgets, budget monitoring, ICT Monitoring, VFM reviews, equality objectives review	Governance Resources + all for KPI's
Housing	Public/Private sector housing policy, Housing strategies, monitoring of ethnicity and actions plans Traveller issues, Repairs management contract monitoring,	Communities Neighbourhoods (Traveller issues)
Planning Services	Planning Performance, Business Processes, Staffing, Forward planning, Local Plan, Planning ICT, Planning budgets	Neighbourhoods Governance Resources
Safer Cleaner Greener	Environmental enforcement Safer Communities activities Waste Partnership Climate change Bobbingworth Nat Res Liaison NEPP liaison PCC/ P and Crime Panel liaison Local Highways Liaison	Neighbourhoods Communities

Not covered tacitly:

Support Services Scrutiny (all)
 CT and Benefits
 HR/Health and Safety (some JCC)
 Procurement Policy
 Data Protection/FOI
 Landscape and built heritage (some local plan?)
 Leisure management contract/Leisure and cultural strategy (PFH A Group)
 Arts and sports Development
 Young people (OSC annual review)
 Health and Wellbeing (some at OSC level)
 Car Parking
 Flood alleviation
 Depot strategy
 Estates strategy
 Grants policy

Scrutiny Panels 2014/15 Suggested Main Responsibility Areas

<p>Resources:</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny – stages as set out in the agreed Scrutiny Review recommendations.</p> <p>Revenue/Capital Monitoring (outurn)</p> <p>Quarterly Financial monitoring</p> <p>Fees and charges consultation</p> <p>Value for Money review</p> <p>HR related matters (sickness/manpower)</p> <p>ICT Strategy implementation</p> <p>Further Reviews of referred KPI's from Governance Panel</p> <p>Directorate Specific Scrutiny Proposals</p> <p>Directorate Specific government consultations</p>	<p>Governance:</p> <p>Equality Scheme and objectives progress monitoring</p> <p>KPI performance monitoring and KPI RAG flagging for further scrutiny by other Panels</p> <p>Consultation and Engagement scrutiny</p> <p>Constitutional related matters</p> <p>Elections reviews</p> <p>Governance matters not within remit of Audit and Governance/Standards Committee. (ie Backstop)</p> <p>Further Reviews of KPI's not within remit of other Panels</p> <p>Directorate Specific Scrutiny Proposals</p> <p>Directorate Specific government consultations</p>
<p>Neighbourhoods:</p> <p>Leisure Strategy/ Leisure Contracts monitoring</p> <p>Local Plan delivery scrutiny</p> <p>Highways Panel liaison</p> <p>LSP liaison</p> <p>Waste Contract scrutiny</p> <p>NEPP liaison</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing liaison</p> <p>Environment related matters (E. Health/environmental issues, climate control and land holdings related)</p> <p>Further Reviews of referred KPI's from Governance Panel</p> <p>Directorate Specific Scrutiny Proposals</p> <p>Directorate Specific government consultations</p>	<p>Communities:</p> <p>Housing related Business Plans, Policies and Strategies scrutiny/monitoring</p> <p>Public and private sector housing scrutiny</p> <p>Repairs Management contractor performance monitoring</p> <p>HRA account monitoring</p> <p>PCC liaison/ Police and Crime Panel liaison</p> <p>Designated Crime and Disorder meetings</p> <p>Safer Communities scrutiny</p> <p>Communities and Cultural Services Strategy</p> <p>Further Reviews of referred KPI's from Governance Panel</p> <p>Directorate Specific Scrutiny Proposals</p> <p>Directorate Specific government consultations</p>

Directors of Service and Lead Officer interviews

How do you find the current structure?

What is your view of the new structure?

Do you have any views on any other structures?

What worries you about this project?

How will you, personally, define success for this project?

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Interview – Derek Macnab (Director of Neighbourhoods & Deputy Chief Executive) 07/10/14

1. Imbalance – there is a lack of consistency with approach between panels e.g. Housing is busy and cyclical work but not necessarily a good use of its time while planning is scratching around for things to do and cancelling meetings.
 - A rebalancing across the panels would be good
 - The current structure is good as it allows new members/current members to get engaged in O&S
 - It allows members of Cabinet/those with aspirations to develop chairmanship skills and experience of holding meetings
 - It currently absorbs a lot of Officer time
 - There is a lack of public awareness and engagement with the panels/meetings
2. In favour of it due to the efficiency of it
 - It's easier for staff to engage with due to it being more logical and better to understand
 - Less need for the amount of staff to attend meetings
 - Better engagement between Chairmen of panels and Directors
 - Better alignment with services
 - Forces people to prioritise what is on each work programme
 - Cost saving (Chairman receives responsibility payment + the meeting allowance for officers to attend meetings – would be lessened if one less panel).
3. Would not like to go back to 3 O&S Committees as did not feel it worked well as it was fragmented.
 - T&F panels can be set up if work is too great (re: proposed new structure)
4. No worries about impact of changes. Would be concerned if things stayed exactly the same.
5. More effective scrutiny and making a difference (e.g. evolve discussions in to more practical outcomes and changes made).
 - More public engagement (what matters most to local people)
 - Energising of the main O&S Committee.

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Interview – Alan Hall (Director of Housing) 07/10/14

1. Doesn't cover the work of all directorates and all executives (portfolios and portfolio holders)
 - It's a bit ad hoc at the moment
 - Housing panel is a useful forum for officers with 2 main benefits;
 1. A lot of pre scrutiny occurs e.g. Housing allocation scheme – which works really well. There is a lost opportunity at the moment for pre scrutiny.
 2. Monitoring progress on work streams and action plans e.g. business plans – report every 6 months to O&S panel (Housing).
 - There are a group of members who are specialists in their areas
2. Fully support it as it covers all of the councils work (portfolio and officer terms)
 - Grouped clearly and logically
 - Suggests equal workload for each of the four panels
 - Management restructure had a lot of thought of grouping four logical functions. There is an opportunity to do the same here.
 - Officers only need to attend one Scrutiny panel per cycle – avoids officers going to a range of meetings and there is a cost saving involved.
3. Four panels is preferred structure.
 - Cabinet members might not like having to go to more Scrutiny Panels per cycle. If concern to members then could have four O&S panels – each panel covering 2 portfolios each;
 1. (A) Planning policy & (B) Environment & (C) Safer, greener transport (Derek Macnab – Lead Officer)
 2. (A) Housing & (B) Leisure & Community Services (Alan Hall – Lead Officer)
 3. (A) Finance & (B) Technology & support (Bob Palmer – Lead Officer)
 4. (A) Governance & Development Management & (B) Asset management & Economic Development (Colleen O'Boyle – Lead Officer)

They could meet each quarter to discuss all business related to each Panel (and therefore sub sections).

4. If we stay the same and we don't make any changes.

Interview – Alan Hall (Director of Housing) 07/10/14

- Officers and members having to go to a range of meetings at each cycle.
- 5. A new system where all executive and officer functions are covered by a scrutiny panel with an equality of workload with consistent Terms of reference dealing with both issues common to all scrutiny panels and ad hoc issues which makes the best use of officers and policy holders time.

Any other comments

- **Question** - Start times of panel meetings need to be considered e.g. Housing panel starts at 5:30pm, other panels start at different times. Should they all start at the same time or do they agree at the start of the year what time they will start?
- Potentially new scrutiny panels could take on Task and Finish Panels. If something needs to be looked at then can set them up.
- Every non Cabinet Member (48) should have the opportunity to sit on a scrutiny panel (12 per Panel) – raises issue with **proportionality**. Every non Cabinet member should be allocated to a Scrutiny Panel.

Interview – Nigel Richardson (Assistant Director: Development Management) 03/10/14

1. Only involved with planning scrutiny panel. Have attended meetings over the years but only recently as a Lead Officer.
 - Panels seem to be scratching around for things to bring to the panel
 - Hasn't really got much out of the process and they have had to cancel meetings in the past.
 - Doesn't think much changes as a result of meetings (seems to be more about information gathering for members rather than scrutinising) – Example given was 'you cannot scrutinise individual planning applications' therefore there seems little point in the process.
2. Makes more sense to have it as Directorate based panels as items are more easily located (e.g. the 'non-covered' items on the current structure).
 - It currently feels like forced scrutiny (looking for things to cover instead of there being a real need for it). Hopefully the new structure would give clarity on what needs to be covered for real scrutiny.
 - Preference would be for this model
 - **Question** – Does planning come in to the Governance Directorate (e.g. under specific scrutiny proposals)?
 - **Question** – Building control also not mentioned in current structure or new structure. Where does it fit in?
3. No other views on other structure models. Had envisioned it as a four panel structure in line with the Directorates.
 - **Question** - Would like to compare and contrast with other Councils for O&S re: best practice – Informed that we use the East of England O&S scrutiny forum on Knowledge Hub and that the Essex O&S forums that are restarting (seemed pleased with response).
4. No worries about the project but would be disappointed if panels stayed the same.
5. That the four panel structure related to Directorates be adopted.

Additional info

- Liked the idea of the facilitated workshop to cover topics of:
 - What the role of Scrutiny is
 - What we want to achieve with Scrutiny
 - Where do our priorities lie re: Scrutiny

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Interview – Simon Hill (Assistant Director: Governance & Performance Management) 06/10/14

1. Bits work well while other parts do not.
 - Constitution and Housing panels work well. Others do not have such a focused work programme.
 - Some parts are really looked at while other parts have no oversight at all.
 - There is no input from members on the important things they want to look at (only dealing with things brought to them by Officers to a certain degree).
 - Effective discussions and interviews at panel level.
2. Delivers what members may want.
 - Think there was confusion between the responsibility chart being a work programme.
 - Members need to be a bit more selective on what they look at for Scrutiny.
 - **Question** – Is there a need for a separate Audit and Governance Committee and Standards Committee (not statutory Committees). If changing to a new structure could these not be absorbed in to the Governance Panel? This could then save up time and resources to then have capacity for more Task and Finish Panels.
3. You could slice up the subject matters in different ways.
 - Members could be very selective over Scrutiny that you undertook as opposed to having five panels that meet regularly.
 - Currently inward looking Scrutiny but not outward looking (for public services) e.g.
 - Night time lighting
 - Nightclubs in the centre of town (noise levels and recent stabbings)
 - What are members being asked on the street by the public? (This relates back to question two – if more Task and Finish panels can be facilitated then they can look at these areas).
 - If wanting to save money (do members want this) then there is a need to reduce the amount of work being undertaken e.g. there would need to cut down on over 40 meetings a year (as each officer covers this amount).
4. Whatever the members want, we support.

Interview – Simon Hill (Assistant Director: Governance & Performance Management) 06/10/14

- If radically different choice, we need resources to match. Budget would already have been agreed for staffing for new year so may not be able to match e.g. if increasing number of meetings or panels.
- 5. Members implement a system by new municipal year and own the proposal. Members need to be happy with the choice and feel it is running successfully.
- There should be a review of the success of the project

Additional info

- If choosing the new structure – how is the Constitution review going to be handled? Will this go to the Governance Panel or could it go to a Task and Finish panel who report to the Governance Panel) as this is a large and major task to undertake.
- It needs to be ensured that all members are happy with proposals so that it is a member led process.
- O&S should not focus on performance management (apart from areas that are not performing) as that is Cabinets role. Should also not allow structure to be officer led.

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL SCRUTINY WORKSHOP OUTLINE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has undertaken to review the structure of the Council's existing framework of overview and scrutiny standing panels, and to make recommendations for how any new structure could best complement the new management structure of the Council.

The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Panel undertaking this work are:

To review the current structure of the overview and scrutiny panel framework, taking into consideration the report of the recent overview and scrutiny review and how any future panel framework would best fit the management structure of the Council;

(1) To specifically consider whether the Council should:

- retain the current five-panel structure; or
- move to a panel structure based around the new directorate responsibilities (i.e. have four panels instead of five); or
- move towards a commissioning model based upon a work programme;

(2) To consider options for any other panel structure deemed appropriate;

(3) To review the workload and terms of reference of each of the existing scrutiny panels for relevance and consider how their processes could be improved;

(4) To consider how any future scrutiny panel established to review relevant functions of the Governance Directorate would interrelate with the terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Standards Committee; and

(5) To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on options for a new scrutiny panel framework to be implemented from the 2014/15 municipal year.

The Panel has had one meeting to date and aims to report to the OSC and full Council by February 2015.

It is proposed that a facilitated workshop should be run for the Panel members to enable them to have a discussion about the options being considered and associated matters.

Workshop outline programme

Below is a draft outline of what a workshop might look like, to enable Members to discuss the options for moving to a new scrutiny structure (or not). It can be tailored to the Council's precise needs and requirements.

Essentially it allows for a three part discussion, which can be introduced by me as facilitator (or the Chair of the Panel), and facilitated by me:

1) Epping Forest DC's current scrutiny structure

Origins of the structure (has it existed since 2000 or more recently adopted as a change to the original structure – and if so, why?)

What has worked well in using this structure?

- this could focus on various criteria, to enable the discussion to get a solid overview, e.g.:
- success in delivering outcomes that have made a difference, such as improving services and helping to deliver savings
- success in securing effective involvement of non-executive members across all parties
- effectiveness in holding the Cabinet to account
- effectiveness in holding external partners to account
- effectiveness in dealing with issues of public concern

What has not worked well in using this structure?

Is what has not worked so well due to the structure itself or associated processes and Epping Forest's local political culture?

- explore what the reasons for this might be

2) How might the three identified options remedy those deficiencies?

- a) retaining the current five-panel structure, but making other changes to how O & S works within the Council;
- b) moving to a panel structure based around the new directorate responsibilities (i.e. have four panels instead of five); or
- c) moving towards a commissioning model, with an OSC devising a work programme and utilising different ways of carrying out scrutiny activities to deliver the programme, including commissioning task and finish reviews.

Examples could be provided of councils with b) and c) type arrangements

The discussion would focus on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the three options, using the same criteria as in 1).

The discussion could also encompass thinking about the respective roles of O & S, audit (as in an Audit and Governance Committee) and Standards Committee.

Is there any duplication?

What are the merits/demerits of separating O & S and Audit?

Are there ways of upholding standards without programming in and running a series of Standards Committee meetings?

This may or may not lead to some clearer ideas about what the panel favours as a new structure.

3) *How might a new (or retained) structure work? What needs to be changed to overcome the identified weaknesses in the chosen structure?*

No structure is absolutely perfect, so it is a question of identifying what the priorities are for O & S and the Council in devising and operating a scrutiny structure. This might mean ranking the criteria used in 1) in order to help judge the most important outcomes that are being sought from a restructure.

4) *Capturing the outcomes and the way forward*

This final session would bring together the thoughts and conclusions from the previous three sessions and chart a way forward for the Panel so that it can deliver its report with evidenced recommendations on time.

Tim Young
Scrutiny adviser

020 8904 2815
07985 072979

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