

## Proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibilities

### January 2024

Following a review of scrutiny arrangements, the council is planning to consider new arrangements from its March council meeting.

Changes to the council's constitution will therefore be necessary.

We suggest that meetings operate in accordance with current arrangements in terms of procedure but changes are made to the structure and responsibilities of the committees as follows:

#### 1. Membership

(a) Each Overview Committee and each Scrutiny Committee shall consist of 10 Members including its appointed Chair and Vice Chair.

(b) The quorum of each Committee is 4 members of the committee who are Councillors.

(c) To the extent that the law requires an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to include a person who is not a Member, then the membership shall be made up of 10 Members plus the number of additional persons required, provided that for the avoidance of doubt this provision does not apply to any joint arrangements entered into by the Council.

(d) In relation to the exercise of overview and scrutiny functions relating to education matters, the membership of "People Overview & Scrutiny Committee shall include: (i) a person nominated by a Diocesan Board of Education for a Church of England diocese falling wholly or partly within the area of the Council; (ii) a person nominated by the Bishop of any Roman Catholic diocese falling wholly or partly within the area of the Council; and (iii) two parent governors from maintained schools within the area of the Council 20230116

(e) No Overview & Scrutiny Committee or task & finish group shall include any Member of the Cabinet-Executive whilst so appointed.

(f) Subject, where appropriate, to relevant provisions set out in a scheme made by the Council for such purposes and to any other relevant legislative limitations an Overview Committee and a Scrutiny Committee may include persons who are not Members to act as advisors or non-voting contributors.

(g) There shall be no power to appoint substitutes to any Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## 2. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

(a) The Chair and Vice-Chair of each Overview Committee and each Scrutiny Committee shall be appointed annually by Full Council unless Full Council determines otherwise.

(b) The Chair and vice-chair of each Scrutiny Committee shall be nominated at the Annual Council each year where Full Council will be asked to agree appointments.

### Sub-Committees and task and finish groups

(a) Overview Committee and Scrutiny Committees may not appoint Sub-Committees.

(b) Each OSC may appoint up to 2 task and finish groups per year, providing these can demonstrate a positive and necessary contribution to the council's priorities. Task and finish groups to comprise of up to 6 members and should complete its work within 10 weeks.

(d) The Proper Officer shall maintain a list of all task & finish groups, including: (i) membership; (ii) terms of reference; (iii) objective (iv) reporting deadlines

### Meetings

(a) The number of ordinary meetings of each Overview Committee and each Scrutiny Committee in a year will normally be 8 unless otherwise determined by Full Council.

(b) The Chair of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall have the power to call one or more special meeting(s) of the Committee of which s/he is the Chair.

(c) The Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee may determine that any of its meetings should be cancelled for insufficient business.

### Functions

(1) Policy development ("pre-decision scrutiny"). Committees may undertake 'pre-decision scrutiny' in areas which will assist the Council and the Cabinet in key areas of policy or corporate improvement – this should be with the agreement of the Cabinet but there may be a small number of extraordinary circumstances where such agreement is either not appropriate or possible; (ii) investigate areas and issues of emerging concern in the Borough with a view to making recommendations to the Cabinet.

(2) Scrutiny committees may:

(i) review and scrutinise decisions made by the Cabinet and/or Council officers, and the impact of these decisions, both in relation to individual decisions as well as the aggregated impact of multiple decisions; (ii) take a strategic approach to reviewing organisational performance against council improvement.

### **Committee responsibilities**

The three proposed new committees would therefore have the following responsibilities:

#### **Place**

This committee will consider and hold to account the relevant cabinet member(s) and Director(s) for the delivery of the council's plans and financial strategy as they relate and impact on the Borough's amenities, infrastructure, local economy, development, and community-based services, such as libraries and leisure facilities.

Its focus will be on improvement in these areas to support the council's recovery plans, including service transformation, financial and savings targets and asset management or disposal.

It will need to have oversight and scrutiny of policy as it relates to local services, development and community well-being but will retain overall financial recovery in these areas as a priority.

It will also challenge through constructive scrutiny the Cabinet's proposals and plans and their impact and effectiveness of proposed improvements or changes on communities, and individuals.

#### **People**

This committee will consider and hold to account the relevant cabinet member(s) and Director(s) for the delivery of the council's plans and financial strategy as they relate to children and adult social care, health, education and wellbeing.

The remit of the committee will therefore cover;

#### *Children's Social Care & wellbeing:*

Including; safeguarding, children in care, early years, childcare, learning and school effectiveness, special educational needs, and disability (SEND), School admissions, organisation and place planning and transport.

#### *Adult Social Care:*

Including; commissioning and delivery of social care services for adults and older people, support for carers, safeguarding vulnerable adults, public health.

### *Health Scrutiny:*

Review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Thurrock through exercising the powers under Section 244 of the National Health Service Act 2006 as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Protocol for Health Overview.

### **Corporate**

This committee will consider and hold to account the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Chief Executive and Director of Finance (Sec 151) for the delivery of the council improvement and recovery plans and financial strategy.

Its focus will include:

Council budget, medium term financial plan, capital programme and budget monitoring. This committee will also provide scrutiny oversight of; transformation plans, assets disposal and disinvestments.

Additionally the committee will provide constructive challenge to Cabinet on organisational change and development of council policy, corporate plan and improvement plans to add value, through early pre-decision scrutiny and shaping. It will also take account of community impact of corporate and financial plans.

Matters that are considered cross-cutting and which may affect more than one scrutiny committee will, by agreement of committee chairs be referred to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, to avoid duplication or the issue being overlooked.

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