

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Simon Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	30 January 2019

REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an overview of the areas considered as part of the scrutiny development review undertaken by North West Employers (NWE) during 2018 and to agree some initial principles for further consideration, with Group Leaders after the election and at the Annual Council meeting.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To note the proposed actions in response to the overall findings of the scrutiny development review which are attached at Appendix 9(a) to the report.

2.2 To request that the Council, at the Annual meeting in May 2019, consider the formation of a Scrutiny Leadership Board to report to Council on a regular basis.

2.3 To agree that the functions of the Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee are amended to remove the budget consultation exercise with the Trade Unions and Non-Domestic Ratepayers (as this will be undertaken directly with the Executive).

2.4 To agree the principle that financial management scrutiny is undertaken by the respective scrutiny committees throughout the year and that a further report is brought back to the Annual Council meeting in May to bring this into effect.

2.5 To agree that a review is undertaken of the Protocol on Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Cabinet Member Relations in view of the findings of the NWE report recommending greater liaison between the Executive, scrutiny and to strengthen links to the Audit Committee and that a revised Protocol is considered after the May 2019 elections, with a report to a future Council meeting.

2.6 To request that the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel in undertaking its forthcoming full review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, takes into account the above recommendations.

3.0 Reason for recommendations

3.1 The proposals are based on a number of recommendations contained within the NWE Scrutiny Development Review Report and are based on best practice. Agreement of these at this juncture would allow for more detailed proposals to be developed prior to the Annual Council meeting in May 2019 when the Council will be asked to agree the formation of committees and any associated changes to the Constitution.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

To not agree the proposed principles.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The recommendations in this report meet all the Council's priorities.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 NWE was commissioned to undertake a review of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements. The NWE representatives undertook desktop research, observed relevant meetings, met focus groups of scrutiny councillors, executive and senior managers and undertook individual interviews with key people.

5.2 The findings of the NWE review were shared with a workshop comprising the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny, members of the Executive and senior officers in September 2018 and initial discussions were held on the findings and proposals to address these.

5.3 Following on from the workshop a working group (comprising of a Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chair, Audit Chair, Executive Member, Chief Officer, the Head of Democratic Governance and the Scrutiny Manager) was established to consider the recommendations of the report along with the feedback from the workshop and identify actions and next steps to take.

5.4 A further feedback session was presented to the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny, members of the Executive and senior officers by members of the working group in January 2019, highlighting the key considerations of the working group and

demonstrating the importance of key issues such as involvement in policy development, showing the impact of scrutiny and increasing involvement and enthusiasm for scrutiny.

5.5 A number of operational changes have been made following the workshop (or will be made in the near future) and these have been implemented without any approvals being required:

- The development of a guide to scrutiny to highlight the value of scrutiny in its role in policy development
- The development of a role profile for Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs to identify skills required a scrutiny committee member
- A review of the members induction programme to prioritise scrutiny training
- Engagement with a North West University to provide some extra resource, to assist with research and analytical support when required (to be implemented)
- Identifying a pool of external expert advisers to assist on a casual basis (to be implemented).

5.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 9(a) - Scrutiny Development Review

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 The Council has a statutory duty to establish scrutiny committees.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 There are no Human Resource considerations.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 There are no equalities considerations to this report.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 There are no costs arising from the proposals at this stage although this will be subject to any recommendations to Council from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

9.2 The report is recommending that financial management scrutiny is undertaken by the committees throughout the year alongside other information being presented on Council services e.g. updates, performance information etc. This will help to ensure that financial implications are continually monitored and impact upon service provision is assessed.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no risk management considerations.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 There are no ethical considerations.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Consultation has taken place with the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs through the initial feedback event in September 2018 and follow-up event on 21 January 2019. A Working Group was also involved in shaping the initial proposals that are contained within the report and appendix.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 NWE Scrutiny Development Review Report