

## REPORT OF CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL

(Meeting held 17 March 2011)

### 1. REVIEW OF SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS (REPORT A)

The Corporate Overview Panel (COP) has considered and now makes recommendations to the Council on the future structure of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements, with a view to implementation from the new Council administration in May 2011.

The Council will be aware that the review has been underway for some time. Mark Palmer, South East Employers (SEE) was appointed in February 2010 to undertake an independent review, which was conducted in April and May 2010. A copy of the SEE report was sent to all Members in late May 2010.

In June 2010, COP provisionally accepted the report and recommendations made by SEE but in September deferred making recommendations on the recommended structural changes pending the publication of the Localism Bill which was expected to include an option for some councils to revert to a Committee system. The Localism Bill was subsequently published and included such a provision, but the effect of other provisions meant that any change back to a committee system could not be introduced until after the next ordinary election of Councillors in May 2015.

The Scrutiny Review Working Group then reconvened and recommended an amended structure for this Council's scrutiny arrangements, reducing the number of Panels from 7 to 3 in line with the recommendations made by SEE.

Cllr Weeks, a member of the Working Group raised concerns on a number of points and felt unable to support the recommendations as a package.

There was a strong recommendation by SEE that task and finish groups should become the "workhorse" of any new structure. They fully support that approach.

COP thoroughly debated the major recommendations by SEE and its recommendations on the way forward appear below.

The Panel considered that the recommendations relating to the new structure, and in particular the service areas to be covered by each panel are very much a first stage in the process of overhauling and improving the scrutiny panel function. Changes to each Panel's terms of reference that might be identified in the future could easily and quickly be made.

It is recommended that each Overview and Scrutiny Panel comprises 10 members. These members must be appointed in accordance with the principles of proportional representation. On the basis of 3 Panels with 10 members each, the total number of Committee/Panel places to be filled (including the Standards Committee to which the principles of proportionality do not apply) would be:

Currently	146
Recommended structure	102

These places exclude the envisaged task and finish groups and any standing sub-groups that might be appointed.

If the proposed new structure for the Panels is implemented, the following estimated annual savings could be achieved:

Special Responsibility Allowances (4 Chairmen)	£18,608
Travel	£ 3,000
Printing and Postage	£ 2,000

It should be noted that the estimated savings in travel, printing and postage do not take account of any costs associated with the task and finish working groups as these are impossible to quantify at this stage. There are also likely to be savings in officer support costs, but these also cannot be estimated in advance of knowing the extent of the support required by the task and finish working groups.

Because of the need to change the Constitution if the new structure is agreed, the Cabinet has considered the recommendations appearing below. Their views are reported elsewhere on the agenda.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

(a) ***That the recommendations by South East Employers for the structure of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels be approved for implementation following the next ordinary election of councillors on 5 May 2011***

(b) ***That the new Overview and Scrutiny Panels be named:***

***The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel  
The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel  
The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel***

# ***and that they be responsible initially for the service areas set out in Appendix 1 to this report;***

(c) ***That the remainder of the operational recommendations contained in the report by South East Employers be approved in principle and that the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the newly-appointed Overview and Scrutiny Panels be tasked as a group with those activities set out in the SEE report and preparation of an implementation/ improvement plan in respect of the SEE report recommendations, reporting back to the Cabinet and the Review Panels as necessary;***

(d) ***That there be 10 members on each Overview and Scrutiny Panel; and***

(e) ***That the first meetings of the new Overview and Scrutiny Panels be held on 16 May 2011 to elect their Chairmen, appoint their Vice-Chairmen, and to agree dates and times of meetings for the remainder of the Council year.***

**Cllr J G Ward  
CHAIRMAN**

## **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel:**

*(Issues currently the responsibility of the Policy & Resources and Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holders)*

1. Corporate and Community Plans
2. Performance Management
3. Political and Management Structures
4. Financial Strategy
5. Risk Management
6. Communications
7. Human Resources Strategy
8. Other corporate matters
9. Value for Money
10. Information and Communications Technology
11. Asset Management - Land and Buildings Strategy
12. Capital and Revenue Budgets
13. Council Tax and Benefits (incl. Housing)
14. National Non-Domestic Rates and Discretionary Non-domestic rate relief
15. Central Support Services including
  - i. Accountancy
  - ii. Information Services
  - iii. Exchequer Functions (Payroll, Payments, Cashiers, Debtors)
  - iv. Legal and Democratic Services
  - v. Chief Executive's Administration
16. Employee and Civic Catering
17. Health and Safety of Employees *(currently Employment, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder)*
18. Economic Development / Business Partnership / Tourism *(currently Employment, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder)*

## **Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

*(Issues currently the responsibility of the Housing Portfolio, the Leisure, Culture & Youth Matters Portfolio, the Crime & Disorder Portfolio and the personal health and social inclusion responsibilities of the Employment, Health & Wellbeing Portfolios)*

1. Housing issues
2. Leisure Services, including
  - a. Arts
  - b. Play
  - c. Sport
  - d. Recreation
  - e. Museums
  - f. Galleries
  - g. Libraries
  - h. Children and Youth Matters
  - i. Open Space
  - j. Leisure related and other non-service specific and core funding Grants (but not Citizens' Advice Bureau or Community First)
3. Crime and Disorder matters
4. Community Safety
5. Emergency Planning
6. Road Safety

7. Personal Health and Social Inclusion
  - Health strategies;
  - Health improvement programmes;
  - Promotion of health and social inclusion issues in the community;
  - Ancillary activities that affect the health and welfare of residents in the District;
  - Welfare funerals
8. Adult Learning

## **Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

*(Issues currently the responsibility of the Environment Portfolio, the Planning and Transportation Portfolio and the Environmental Health Services responsibilities of the Employment, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio)*

1. Sustainability Co-ordination
2. Refuse Collection/Disposal
3. Street Cleaning
4. Grounds Maintenance
5. Recycling including Project Integra
6. Public Conveniences
7. Cemeteries
8. Abandoned Vehicles
9. Coastal Protection
10. Land Drainage and Sewerage (other than in the public health context)
11. Planning Strategy and Development Plans
12. Building Control
13. Transportation
14. Car Park Management
15. Highways
16. Street Naming and Numbering
17. Local Land Charges
18. Air pollution control
19. Noise and statutory nuisances
20. Drinking water standards
21. Drains and sewers (in the public health context)
22. Land contamination
23. Radiation monitoring
24. Food safety
25. Communicable disease
26. Pest control
27. Dog warden services
28. Sunday Trading
29. Animal Welfare (except for those matters being the responsibility the General Purposes and Licensing Committee)