

CABINET – 2 MAY 2018

DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS - OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANELS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The current arrangements for overview & scrutiny have been in place since May 2011.
- 1.2 The Council has undergone much change in recent times as a result of the economic climate and increased responsibilities. A portfolio area which is currently facing major change is that responsible for housing and homelessness where significant new legislation has come into force. The Council has taken action to respond to these new challenges in various ways, and it is now considered appropriate to review the structure of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for members to engage in new policy initiatives as they are developed and to scrutinise delivery of the Council's services.

2. CURRENT POSITION AND SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

- 2.1 There are currently three Overview & Scrutiny Panels:

Corporate
Community
Environment

- 2.2 With the Council's significant new responsibilities under Housing and Homelessness legislation, it is considered that a Panel dedicated solely to "Housing" issues is required.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The composition of the Cabinet is currently:

Leader (Cllr Barry Rickman)
Community Affairs (Cllr Diane Andrews)
Environment & Regulatory Affairs (Cllr Alison Hoare)
Finance, Corporate Services & Improvement (Cllr Jeremy Heron)
Housing Services (Cllr Jill Cleary)
Leisure & Wellbeing (Cllr James Binns)
Local Economic Development, Property & Innovation (Cllr Michael Harris)
Planning & Infrastructure (Cllr Edward Heron)

- 3.2 Recommendations for a new structure for the Panels are set out below. These provide for the services falling within one or more Portfolios to be scrutinised by a single Review Panel.

<i>O&S Panel</i>	<i>Portfolio</i>	<i>Service responsibilities</i>
Corporate	Leader (Cllr Barry Rickman)	Political Structures
		Employee Engagement
		Corporate Plan
		Staff Matters
		Organisational strategy
		Town & Parish matters
		Emergency Planning
	Finance, Corporate Services & Improvement (Cllr Jeremy Heron)	Medium Term Financial Plan
		Financial Services
		Business Rates & Council Tax
		Housing Benefits
		ICT
		Legal Services
		Democratic Services
		Human Resources
		Performance & risk management
	Local Economic Development, Business & Innovation (Cllr Michael Harris)	Economic Development Strategy
		Business Engagement & Growth
		New Forest Business Partnership
		Local Enterprise Partnerships
		Asset Management/Property Matters
		Smarter Working
		Collaboration & Innovation
Community & Leisure	Community Affairs (Cllr Diane Andrews)	Community Engagement
		Community Grants & Support
		Customer Services
		Elections & Electoral Registration
		Community Safety Partnership (Safer New Forest)
		CCTV
		Careline
		Communications

<i>O&S Panel</i>	<i>Portfolio</i>	<i>Service responsibilities</i>
Community & Leisure (Cont)	Leisure & Wellbeing (Cllr James Binns)	Health & Leisure Centres
		Local Leisure, Arts & Heritage
		Health & Wellbeing Board
		Older Persons' Affairs
		Children & Youth Affairs
Housing	Housing Services (Cllr Jill Cleary)	Housing Strategy (Local Housing Need)
		Council House Estate Management and Rent Accounting
		Council Housing Maintenance
		Homelessness
Environment & Infrastructure	Environment & Regulatory Affairs (Cllr Alison Hoare)	Refuse Collection & Recycling
		Street Cleaning
		Abandoned Vehicles
		Environmental Health Services
		Coastal Protection & Drainage Issues
		Grounds Maintenance Services
		Cemeteries
		Public Toilets
		Sustainability
		Improvement Grants & Private Sector Housing
	Planning & Infrastructure (Cllr Edward Heron)	Local Plan
		Development Control
		Building Control
		Listed Buildings & Conservation
		Open Space Infrastructure
		Car Parking & Traffic Management Matters

- 3.3 There will inevitably be occasions when decisions to be taken by the Council or the Cabinet affect matters being dealt with by more than one Portfolio Holder, but on these occasions, when input from Panels is required, joint meetings of the relevant Panels could be arranged. This happens now.

4. FREQUENCY OF PANEL MEETINGS

- 4.1 The Council's Standing Orders for Meetings provide, amongst other things, that each Panel shall fix dates and times for its meetings at least one year ahead. The Panels have traditionally met five times per year, with an additional annual meeting to elect the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman. In view of the proposed increase in the number of Panels from three to four, it is suggested that each Panel meets four, instead of five, times per year, in addition to the annual meeting. If the need arises, special meetings may be arranged.
- 4.2 At present only one Panel, the Community Panel, meets in the evenings. This restricts choice for members who are in employment and who find it difficult to attend meetings during the day. It is therefore recommended that two Panels, the proposed Housing and the proposed Community & Leisure Panels, meet in the evenings, starting at 6.00 p.m.

5. PROPORTIONALITY ON COMMITTEES AND PANELS

- 5.1 Under the principles of proportionality, and with the composition of the Council prior to the vacancy in the Fawley, Blackfield and Langley ward, the allocation of seats should be as follows:

Total seats	107
Conservative Group	102
Liberal Democrat Group	3
Independent	2

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Appointing an additional O&S Panel will result in the payment of an additional Panel Chairman's allowance of £4,998 per year. Travel costs would be incurred by members attending meetings of an additional Panel but these would be offset by savings if the frequency of the existing Panels is reduced from 5 to 4 per year.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL; CRIME & DISORDER; AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There might be a marginal increase in the number of journeys councillors undertake to attend meetings, but this would not be significant. There are no crime & disorder or equality & diversity implications.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (a) That it be recommended to the Council:
- (i) That an additional Overview & Scrutiny Panel be introduced, and that the Portfolios reporting to each be as set out in paragraph 3.2 of this report;
 - (ii) That each Panel continues to comprise 10 members;
 - (iii) That the political proportionality be as set out in paragraph 4 of this report;
 - (iv) That each Panel meets four times per year, in January, March, June and September, with
 - an additional annual meeting to appoint the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Panel, and
 - special meetings as may be deemed necessary by the Chairman of that Panel.
- (b) That it be recommended to the O&S Panels that they meet on the following dates and times during 2018/19:

Panel	Day of meeting	Recommended dates	Start time
Corporate O&S Panel	Thursday	28 June 2018 27 September 2018 24 January 2019 28 March 2019	9.30 a.m.
Community & Leisure O&S Panel	Tuesday	19 June 2018 18 September 2018 15 January 2019 19 March 2019	6.00 p.m.
Environment O&S Panel	Thursday	14 June 2018 13 September 2018 10 January 2019 14 March 2019	2.00 p.m.
Housing O&S Panel	Wednesday	20 June 2018 19 September 2018 16 January 2019 20 March 2019	6.00 p.m.

Further information:
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Background Papers:
None