



## **REPORT of DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

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**to  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
15 OCTOBER 2020**

### **COMMITTEE OPERATING PROTOCOL AND WORKING PRACTICES**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval of a revised operating protocol for the Committee .

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That the revised operating protocol for the Committee is agreed and recommended to the Council for adoption by way of updating the Constitution
- (ii) That the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Working Group are agreed as at **APPENDIX A**.
- (iii) To agree the use of the O&S Working Group as an operational mechanism to review and recommend workplan items, and a standing requirement for the working group to meet ahead of the Committee meeting.

#### **3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 The workplan for the Committee was reviewed over a period when the last Committee meetings were held. On 31 October 2019 it was agreed to remove several items deemed to be ‘operational’ or where information could be provided via a briefing note to Members.
- 3.2 The Committee has only met once since due to lack of business, and then a subsequent close down of Committee meetings in March 2020 due to Covid-19.
- 3.3 Although the Committee has a general operating protocol alongside its Terms of Reference in the Council’s Constitution, the proposed revised operating protocol at **APPENDIX A** to this report aims to provide a deeper level of detail around agreed working practices for the Committee, and to drive a more robust Workplan based on actual scrutiny going forwards.
- 3.4 The revised Operating Protocol is based on the principles of advice previously given to the Committee which reflects the updated Government Guidance issued earlier last year. The Council must have regard to that Guidance in whatever arrangements it puts in place for scrutiny. A briefing note issued to the Committee at the time is now recirculated afresh at **APPENDIX B** to this report.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The revised protocol aims to give an agreed understanding for the working practices of the Committee and guide the Committee's approach to scrutiny in the future.

#### 5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 The working practices and role of the Committee help to underpin the Performance and Efficiency theme.

#### 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The protocol provides clarity for internal and external customers about the supportive work that the Overview and Scrutiny committee will provide.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – N/A
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – A robust working approach to Overview and Scrutiny would help to minimise organisational risks going forwards.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – N/A
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Clarity on the working practices and use of the Working Group to filter items for the workplan will lead to more efficient use of resources.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – N/A
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – N/A

#### Background Papers:

Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – May 2019

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