

SCRUTINY PANEL – UPDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE	
Executive Summary	This reports outlines the updated Scrutiny Panel terms of reference and seeks the appointment of a Chair/Vice-Chair and wider Panel Members from Group Leaders.
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To adopt the updated TOR and seek appointments to the Scrutiny Panel. 2. To amend the updated TOR and seek appointments to the Scrutiny Panel. 3. To not adopt the updated TOR and not proceed with re-establishing the Scrutiny Panel.
Consultation(s)	The report has been shared with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.
Recommendations	It is recommended that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee adopts the updated Scrutiny Panel terms of reference, appoints a Chair and Vice-Chair from the Committee and seeks remaining appointments from Group Leaders on a politically balanced basis.
Reasons for recommendations	To create additional capacity for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
Background papers	N/A.

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	All
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Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	The Scrutiny Panel will be able to review elements of the Corporate Plan when required, by request of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	The report does not include any proposals with direct savings or cost implications for the MTFS.
Council Policies & Strategies	The Scrutiny Panel will be able to review Council Policies and Strategies if requested, by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet.

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Terms of reference for the six-month trial Environment & Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel was agreed on 15 th December 2020.

1. Purpose and Operation of the Scrutiny Panel

- 1.1 Establishing a Scrutiny Panel will allow the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to create significant additional resource that can be used to undertake in-depth reviews of existing or emerging policies, provide project oversight, assist with strategy development, undertake scrutiny investigations, and undertake other tasks as directed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Panel will operate by undertaking work that is deemed too detailed or too resource intensive for the wider Overview & Scrutiny Committee, then report back to the Committee with reports and recommendations on its findings.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Panel will primarily be supported by the Scrutiny Officer, though other relevant officers and Cabinet Members may be asked to contribute to reports and attend meetings, as and when required.
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Panel will meet as and when required subject to the demands of its work programme, however due to the administrative demand placed on officers, these meetings will not exceed more than one per month unless agreed otherwise to meet demand.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has previously used Task and Finish Groups, Working Groups or specific Panel's such as the trial Environment and Quality of Life Scrutiny Panel to undertake additional work. This has included reviews of the Council's public convenience strategy, beach huts and chalets, and the market towns initiative. Whilst the use of various sub-committees has been very productive for the Committee, it comes with a significant administrative burden.
- 2.2 Creating a single Scrutiny Panel will allow for a more flexible approach that will enable the Panel to review any topic required by the Committee, without the additional administrative burden of running multiple specific sub-committees. It is expected that the Scrutiny Panel will primarily focus on topics, themes and proposals that emerge from the Corporate Plan, though the Panel may also be able to undertake reviews of other core or discretionary services, if requested.

3. Proposals and Options

- 3.1 The Committee are asked to review and approve the revised Scrutiny Panel terms of reference to create a more efficient single Scrutiny Panel, that can undertake additional work under the direction of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. If adopted, the Committee will need to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair from the Membership of the Committee, whilst the remaining three Members are appointed by Group Leaders, ensuring that the Panel's five Members are politically balanced. Remaining Members of the Panel are not required to be Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members, but cannot be Members of the Executive. Group Leaders should also ensure that those appointed are able to devote the time required to attend an additional sub-committee meeting each month, though it is possible that these meetings may take place remotely.

- 3.2 It should be noted that re-establishing a Scrutiny Panel does not mean that meetings will commence immediately and operate on a continuous basis, as the Panel will operate on an ad-hoc basis, as and when required, as per the request of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 If Members are minded, they may propose amendments to the terms of reference, but these will need to be agreed and accepted by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.4 If Members are not minded to approve the terms of reference and re-establish a Scrutiny Panel, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will continue as is, and will have only limited capacity to undertake work in addition to its existing work programme. As such, this presents a risk that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will not be able to provide adequate scrutiny to all projects, policies, proposals, and performance.

4. Corporate Priorities

It is expected that the formation of the Scrutiny Panel will allow for closer review, scrutiny, input, and assistance in delivering the Council's corporate priorities.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications presented by the content of the report, however the Scrutiny Panel can require significant administrative resource depending on the requests made of the Panel. Members will therefore need to take this into account when setting the Scrutiny Panel's work programme, to ensure that there is adequate officer available to support its operation.

6. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications presented by the content of the report.

7. Risks

Whilst there are no direct risks presented by the content of the report, if the Committee is minded not to form a Scrutiny Panel, a lack of capacity may mean that some projects or policies are not adequately scrutinised, which could present a risk to the Council.

8. Net Zero Target

There are no net zero implications presented by the content of the report, though the Scrutiny Panel may be requested to consider related issues.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

There are no equality, diversity or inclusion implications presented by the content of the report, though the Scrutiny Panel may be requested to consider related issues.

10. Community Safety issues

There are no community safety implications presented by the content of the report, though the Scrutiny Panel may be requested to consider related issues.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to increase the capacity of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and allow Members to undertake in-depth reviews or investigations, it is recommended that Members accept the recommendations and adopt the updated Scrutiny Panel terms of reference attached.