

**Eden District Council  
Scrutiny Co-ordinating Board**

**14 November 2019**

**Accounts and Governance**

**28 November 2019**

**Scrutiny Structure Review – Final Report**

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report from:</b>	Director of Corporate Services
<b>Wards:</b>	All Wards
<b>OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To consider findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Structure Task and Finish scrutiny group.

**2 Recommendation**

**Scrutiny Co-ordinating Board**

It is recommended that the Board:

- (1) comments upon the final report which is attached as appendix 1 to this report; and
- (2) recommends the findings of the draft report to the Accounts and Governance Committee and Council, subject to any comments of the Board.

**Accounts and Governance Committee**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) comments upon the final report which is attached as appendix 1 to this report; and
- (2) recommends the findings of the draft report to Council, subject to any comments of the Board.

**3 Report Details**

- 3.1 At the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Board meeting held on 30 May 2019, Members convened a working group to formulate proposals for a revised Member structure for Scrutiny, having regard to the findings of the Centre for Public Scrutiny review, with a view to implementation for the 2020/21 municipal year.
- 3.2 Terms of Reference for a Scrutiny Structure Review Task and Finish Group ('the Group') were agreed at the Scrutiny Co-Ordinating Board meeting held on 18 July 2019.

- 3.3 In August 2019 the Group began a review of scrutiny arrangements within the District Council. This review sought to compare structures and practices used at comparable Councils, with a view to learning lessons from best practice. The Working Group was chaired by Councillor D Banks and the membership comprised:
- Councillor M Hanley;
  - Councillor D Holden;
  - Councillor D Lawson; and
  - Councillor J Owen (to October 2019).
- 3.4 The Group considered legislation, best practice and information about practice in other local authorities. In addition, a report was specifically commissioned from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, to make recommendations for Eden, with a view to establishing an effective scrutiny function going forward.
- 3.5 Upon conclusion of the report, the Group submitted a final report entitled 'Scrutiny Structure Review' which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Any final decision on the Task and Finish Group's report will be considered by Council at its meeting of 9 January 2020.

## **4 Policy Framework**

- 4.1 The Council has four corporate priorities which are:
- Decent Homes for All;
  - Strong Economy, Rich Environment;
  - Thriving Communities; and
  - Quality Council

- 4.2 This report meets the Quality Council corporate priority

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place through the use of an online survey as part of the review undertaken by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial and Resources**

- 6.1.1 Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the Council's stated priorities, as set out in its Council Plan 2015-19 as agreed at Council on 17 September 2015.
- 6.1.2 The proposals in this report would reduce costs in relation to Member Allowances, holding evening meetings and staff time. Cost savings of around £3,703 are anticipated for the Municipal Year 2020-2021. It is possible that Council, advised by the Independent Remuneration Panel could at some point in the future amend upwards the Special Reasonability Allowance for the Chair of a single Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee thereby eroding any potential future savings.

## 6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 Scrutiny Committees are not decision making bodies. Any changes that may come from this review would need to be considered by the Accounts and Governance Committee and any decision would be for Council.
- 6.2.2 Scrutiny arrangements are detailed in the Council's Constitution and any changes that may come from this review would need to be incorporated in a review of the Constitution.
- 6.2.3 Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been considered in making the recommendations in this report

## 6.3 Human Resources

- 6.3.1 Changes that may come from this review will result in a reduction in staff resource involved in servicing evening meetings. It is likely however, that this resource would be used to service an increase in facilitating Task and Finish Groups.

## 6.4 Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None arising from this report.
Health, Social Environmental and Economic Impact	None arising from this report.
Crime and Disorder	None arising from this report.
Children and Safeguarding	None arising from this report.

## 6.5 Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Reputational risk to Council – Scrutiny Committees cannot alter the Constitution or alter the Executives decision making powers.	The changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees could be perceived to offer a reduced challenge to the Executive.	Clear protocols established to manage expectations between Scrutiny and Executive, together with a simplified scrutiny structure, as set out in the recommendations of this report.

## 7 Other Options Considered

- 7.1 The current three Committee Structure could remain in place. This would have no cost savings and is contrary to the recommendations made by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, which has been concerned with making the scrutiny function more effective.

- 7.2 The Council could adopt a two Committee Structure with one Committee considering internal issues and one considering external issues. This would have no fewer cost savings and is contrary to the recommendations made by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

## **8 Reasons for the Decision/Recommendation**

- 8.1 The proposals outlined in this report would help to increase the impact scrutiny has in supporting Council performance. Reducing the number of Committees would provide cost savings, reduce duplication and provide a clear simplified structure.

### **Tracking Information**

<b>Governance Check</b>	<b>Date Considered</b>
<b>Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)</b>	
<b>Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)</b>	6 November 2019
<b>Relevant Director</b>	5 November 2019

**Background Papers:** G55/19 Scrutiny Structures Review

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Structure Review

**Contact Officer:** Claire Watters, Member Services Officer