

## Appendix B – Overview and Scrutiny Design Papers

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### Background to O&S Design Working Group structure recommendations

At the first meeting of the O&S Design Working Group, a set of principles for added value scrutiny were agreed. These are attached as Appendix 1 and outlined in the boxes below. A number of other agreements were made as follows:

1. Do Members agree that the BCP Council O&S model should be based on good practice rather than the O&S function of one of the three preceding authorities? Yes.
2. In order to harness existing good practice, would the working group like to invite evidence from other BCP members of good practice in their own councils? Yes – invite all BCP members and service directors to disseminate call for evidence by email.
3. Do Members agree that the principles outlined in Appendix 1 should underpin the design of O&S in the new authority? Yes
4. Do members agree that the O&S function should remain under review and development for the first 18-24 months of the BCP Council's life, in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose? Yes.
5. To ensure all scrutiny activity is linked to clear objectives, do Members agree that the initial O&S model should be agile and flexible to be built upon during this period as Council priorities emerge? Yes.

Taking account of the decisions above, and the agreed principles for scrutiny in BCP (Appendix 1), the following recommendations are made. The recommendations and reasons are based on best practice and the opportunity to consider new ways of working; and seek to provide a structure that will best align to these agreed principles.

The diagram of the O&S structure at Appendix 2 accompanies this document and aligns to the recommendations below.

### Development of recommendations

The O&S Design Working Group met a total of four times in addition to attending opportunities offered for all Councillors to contribute to the design of O&S arrangements, in order to hear views expressed. At their meeting on 2 November, O&S Design Working Group members worked with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to discuss the recommendations as outlined below, with amendments made by the group. The recommendations were discussed with the Governance Task and Finish Group on 14 November who provided further comment and steer on the design. All members of BCP were invited to discuss and contribute to the design at a Councillor workshop on 20 November, led by the Centre for Public Scrutiny; and a consideration of the draft constitution at the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 10 December. Submission of comments was also invited by email with a number received by Councillors and Officers. All comments made at meetings and received by email were taken account of by the O&S Design Working Group in their work. On 10 December the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee made a formal resolution to support the proposals as outlined below which were used to inform the drafting of the O&S pages within the Constitution.

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### **Agreed Principle 1**

**Contributes to sound decision making in a timely way by holding decision makers to account as a 'critical friend'.**

Recommended reflection of this principle in the new O&S structure:

- 1) A main scrutiny body (the Overview and Scrutiny Board) meets monthly, tracking the meetings of the council executive.
- 2) This body has responsibility for a wide range of council services and establishes its own sub-committees (on going in-depth monitoring), task and finish groups (time limited in-depth inquiries), working groups (one-off meetings) and rapporteurs (individual members investigating and reporting back on an issue).
- 3) Portfolio Holders are required to account for their area at themed meetings of this Board.
- 4) Call – in is undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- 5) All statutory responsibilities are held by the Overview and Scrutiny Board with the exception of the scrutiny of Executive functions for Health and Adult Social Care, and Children's Services. These areas will be held to account by separate scrutiny committees which maintain a reporting link to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Reasons for recommendations -

#### **Meeting frequency –**

- A structure that can effectively hold decision makers to account will include sufficient opportunity to contribute to decisions as and when required. Good practice elsewhere and recent practice in the Shadow Authority suggests that monthly meetings of an O&S body, tracking the meetings of the Executive, will provide maximum opportunity for this.
- Although O&S work programming should not depend on being reactive to Executive decisions, there will inevitably be a need to consider and make recommendations on 'big ticket items' when these arise – this format of meetings provides this opportunity, whilst any fewer than monthly meetings may limit this opportunity.

#### **Scrutiny body terms of reference –**

- Executive decisions can be held to account in a variety of ways – in one O&S Committee, or a number of Committees split out according to themes or service area. A greater number of bodies requires a lower meeting frequency of these bodies to ensure sufficient resource, which limits the ability to hold the executive account as and when required (see meeting frequency, above).
- Fewer scrutiny bodies has emerged as good practice in recent years, as this requires sharper work prioritisation and recognises the limited resources that scrutiny – and scrutiny members - have at their disposal.
- Fewer bodies does not limit the ability to scrutinise a wide range of service areas, but instead requires the use of more agile and flexible ways of working (eg. working groups and sub-committees - see principle 6 below), selected with intent to a targeted piece of scrutiny. Targeted

and carefully scoped scrutiny of this kind is more likely to have a clear outcome and add value. An example of this may be scrutiny of the council's financial sustainability, which is not service based but would be expected to be a priority of the new council to ensure aims of transition and transformation are met and the financial outlook of the council is sound. A sub-committee on this matter would build on the work done in this area by the Shadow O&S Committee to date.

- The tendency to 'fill' agendas of multiple scrutiny bodies is also reduced as the number of bodies reduces. Filling agendas with areas of interest can often lead to a lack of outcome based scrutiny. This will waste scrutiny resource but also have a negative impact on the esteem carried by scrutiny within the wider council. The recent Government Select Committee on Overview and Scrutiny highlighted that councils report that lack of esteem for scrutiny can be one of the most limiting factors in its effectiveness. Anything that negatively impacts on the esteem of scrutiny in the organisation should be avoided where possible.
- There are clear lines of accountability between Portfolio Holders and the O&S Committee which can otherwise be unclear with a structure containing a wide number of service based committees.
- Portfolio Holders and service areas can be held to account in themed meetings of the O&S Committee. Good practice shows that themed meetings can allow for a more rounded consideration of interdependent issues, and can provide clearer opportunities for stakeholders and experts in the area to be invited to contribute.
- Increasingly, areas of council work can be cross – cutting and decisions are not always contained within one service area. There is a risk that splitting out responsibility for decisions across a number of O&S bodies can prevent a full and rounded consideration of a matter and add unnecessary additional layers of governance – special joint meetings or the passing of a recommendation to scrutinise from one scrutiny body to another. Giving responsibility for the majority of scrutiny functions to one O&S body can eliminate the potential for issues to be considered in isolation or in an untimely way owing to the governance arrangements required to undertake scrutiny in accordance with the constitution.

#### **Call in –**

- A call-in function is required by law, enabling O&S members to ask that an Executive decision is reconsidered prior to implementation. There is no good practice to suggest that this must be undertaken in any particular way. It would seem appropriate that the body with the most responsibility for cross-cutting issues undertakes this role.

#### **Statutory Scrutiny**

- Health and Adult Social Care, and aspects of Children's Services are areas of scrutiny that must be undertaken by statute, and are also known to be high risk areas. As these are known priorities, it is appropriate that scrutiny of these areas is undertaken by two separate committees for these purposes. The Shadow O&S Committee is aware that Children's Services has also been highlighted as an area of higher risk through transition to the new council and warrants dedicated scrutiny.
- The complexity of work in these areas and ineffective scrutiny has led to failings in the areas of child protection and health scrutiny in other councils in recent years (eg. Rotherham and Mid Staffordshire). It is appropriate that the new council reflects these learnings and associated risk in its structure.
- Responsibility for these functions can be delegated directly to these scrutiny bodies, with statutory co-opted members elected to the Children's Services body.

- An expectation of close dialogue and annual reporting to the main scrutiny body would ensure scrutiny resource for these bodies is considered amongst all scrutiny priorities.
- Meeting frequency likely to be required between 6 weekly and quarterly – for consideration.

### **Resource**

- The level of resource available to a scrutiny function must form part of the consideration of the design of the function. In these circumstances of transition to a new council, the dedicated officer resource to support scrutiny in the new authority is not yet known, but in light of financial constraints is unlikely to be high. Members should note that some councils with a high level of scrutiny output have full officer teams at their disposal to undertake scrutiny work, research and co-ordination to support scrutiny members, in addition to the servicing of scrutiny committee meetings. In the anticipated absence of such a resource, BCP will need to be mindful of the need to carefully prioritise its scrutiny work, both in the form of the number of committee meetings requiring servicing and the level of additional work commissioned (sub-committees, working groups, task and finish work etc). Officers of the wider organisation will also be required to support scrutiny and will have a finite amount of resource. Members' resource in being able to attend meetings and undertake proactive work between meetings must also be balanced against the usual induction and learning process required for new councillors, refresher training for returning councillors, familiarisation with new wards and new areas of responsibility from councillors who have not yet served on an upper tier authority. In light of this, it would be advisable for members to take a conservative approach to their design of an O&S function, to ensure that resource is not overreached by the model designed.

## **Agreed Principle 2**

**A member led and owned function – seeks to continuously improve through self- reflection and development.**

Recommended reflection of this principle in the O&S structure:

- 6) O&S Members have responsibility for commissioning own sub-committees, task and finish groups and working groups to undertake the substantive amount of the council's scrutiny work.
- 7) O&S Members can establish a system of rapporteurs, allowing non-Executive members to informally track and report back on activity within council services and under Portfolio Holders.
- 8) All council members have the opportunity to be engaged in the work of scrutiny through a mechanism for all members, and the Executive, to suggest areas of scrutiny to the Overview and Scrutiny Board. O&S members may commission work in response to these suggestions, taking account of likely outcome and value to be added.
- 9) The Overview and Scrutiny Board maintains a scrutiny work programme for the full O&S function - including sub committees and statutory panels - to ensure O&S member ownership of the collective O&S priorities.
- 10) The Overview and Scrutiny Board co-ordinates the self - assessment and reporting of annual scrutiny outcomes to full council and the value added by scrutiny activity.
- 11) The Overview and Scrutiny Board is responsible for co-ordinating and prioritising the training needs of the whole scrutiny function.

Reasons for recommendations -

### **Commissioning**

- Through a structure that relies on the commissioning of work based on desired outcome, rather than a pre-established number of service based scrutiny panels, members are able to take more ownership of scrutiny as a value-added process.
- Part of member ownership is the responsibility for demonstrating the value of scrutiny. In 'making a case' for work, members are actively scoping anticipated benefits before commissioning. This means that scrutiny undertaken is more likely to add value and contribute to the level of esteem for scrutiny in the wider organisation, which assists in it having influence.

### **Member Engagement**

- Providing a mechanism for all members to 'make a case' for scrutiny will assist in the wider engagement of all non – Executive members. It is also good practice for all non-Executive members to be given the opportunity to service on sub-committees, task and finish groups and working groups. This ensures that the group is established on the basis of skills, knowledge and members with a passion for the subject matter.
- O&S members are not overburdened with work and the activity in working groups and sub-committees is spread across all non-Executive members.

- A known concern of scrutineers can be that they don't see the impact of their work. Commissioned work is more likely to be carefully scoped and thus have a more tangible outcome. This provides more motivation for those undertaking the scrutiny work that their work is making a difference.
- A rapporteur system further provides opportunity for engagement of non-Executive members based on experience and interest, and provides an additional resource for scrutiny. Members undertaking this role will need to be proactive, and this model can assist in embedding the skill of being a confident and proactive scrutineer across the wider non-Executive member corps.

### **Work Programme**

- Oversight of one work programme, for all of scrutiny, by scrutiny members ensures scrutiny members can more easily take ownership of scrutiny activity and effectively prioritise. This also guards against agendas being officer driven, with officers bringing items to scrutiny to 'tick a box' rather than based on the value likely to be added by scrutiny's engagement in the matter.

### **Self – assessment and annual reporting**

- Self- assessment of work undertaken will encourage members to reflect on the value they have added in their scrutiny work. Reporting on own activity in this way is considered best practice. Communicating this to the wider council will assist with stakeholders' understanding of the value that O&S can bring.
- Through annual self-reporting, O&S members will be able to identify established sub-committees that may require formalising on a permanent basis in the council's constitution, and remunerated chairmanships on the basis of the level of workload. Annual reporting provides the mechanism for this reflection.

### **Agreed Principle 3**

#### **Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and reflected in the Council's decision making process**

Recommended reflection of this principle in the O&S structure:

- 12) A dedicated O&S Committee is established with responsibility for engaging the public (see Appendix 3 for draft terms of reference)
- 13) Lines of accountability to decision makers are as transparent as possible to aid public understanding and engagement in holding decision makers to account.
- 14) Consideration on how the public, community groups and subject experts can be used is built into all scoping work for commissioned overview and scrutiny.

#### **Reasons for recommendations –**

##### **Enabling the voice and concerns of the public**

- Overview and Scrutiny has the ability to work in a more flexible and informal way than Cabinet or Council meetings which are usually of a formal nature. When considered within the whole decision making structure, Overview and Scrutiny is an appropriate place to engage the community and take account of the public voice.
- Many councils find it very difficult to bring the public voice into overview and scrutiny work without significant resource in taking meetings into the community, or heavily promoting scrutiny work through social media such as twitter, facebook and blogs. Establishing a dedicated place for this will provide more opportunity for public engagement and also bring the need for it into sharper focus. It can otherwise be easy for a council with limited public engagement or resource to do little more to encourage it than provide opportunity for public speaking on each agenda.
- A recent review for the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea noted that the public are unlikely to engage in a committee where there are other items on the agenda. It is understandable that reports of a technical nature on a committee agenda do not set the tone for an inviting and unthreatening experience for members of the public. In providing a dedicated body for engagement with the public, this limiting factor is removed.
- A dedicated Committee for public engagement will provide opportunity for two – way dialogue: the public can input with questions, issues of concern or areas that they may wish the council to investigate or change. The council can also consult the public via such a committee – for example on what should be included in the annual overview and scrutiny work plan. In this way, the council is demonstrating that it is more outward looking and has the opportunity to respond to the public on issues raised. This should lead to a scrutiny work programme that makes a difference to the public and communities rather than being inward looking.
- The concept of a dedicated 'Listening Committee' has been piloted by the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in response to the tragedy of Grenfell. This follows a trend for other councils that have been involved in failings – sexual exploitation in Rotherham, NHS failings in Mid Staffordshire – to

make changes to engender more public engagement. This is because it has been identified by inquiries into these failings that the council needed to do more to 'test' the information provided by decision makers. In some cases, this criticism was directed at scrutiny members. The need for better 'triangulation' of information is increasingly accepted to be imperative to good scrutiny - in short – testing what officers/ Portfolio holders or external decision makers are telling scrutiny by consulting other sources of information, which could include data, service user experience or the views of subject experts. The establishment of a committee to support the public voice and triangulation would represent an inventive opportunity and a marker that the council intends to follow this best practice path in its scrutiny considerations.

### **Transparency**

- With a number of different Portfolio holders, service areas and scrutiny panels the 'route' in for a member of the public who wants to engage in a particular issue can become complicated to negotiate as the three will rarely align in one committee. As soon as changes are made to a portfolio or service area, this can affect which scrutiny panel should be best placed to have responsibility for this area. In a period of transformation, as the new council will be entering, it will be very difficult to maintain a good level of transparency in this respect across a number of scrutiny panels. Providing one main body for the majority of scrutiny responsibilities will make this clearer. Providing a dedicated body for public input will further assist.

### **Political scrutiny**

- Whilst politics should not play a major part in scrutiny, clearly, scrutiny will be affected by the political make up of a council. A large opposition may use scrutiny to challenge for challenge's sake, whilst a large majority may lead to a lack of organic public scrutiny where much of the real scrutiny takes place in political group meetings that are not public. Enabling maximum opportunity for public input into scrutiny will assist in cutting through this to bring a different voice into scrutiny. This was evidenced by a recent Bournemouth LGA Peer Review into Equality and Diversity, which recommended that a greater public voice in Bournemouth's scrutiny work would provide greater challenge within the scrutiny process.

#### **Agreed Principle 4**

**Engages in decision making and policy development at an appropriate time to be able to have influence.**

Recommended reflection of this principle in the O&S structure:

- 15) Scrutiny meetings track decision makers (see recommendation 1 above) whilst retaining sufficient capacity for flexible, informal work that will provide O&S with insight into council activity and input into early policy development.

Reasons for recommendations -

#### **Meeting Frequency**

- See principle and recommendation 1 above.

#### **Informal working**

- Informal scrutiny work is increasingly considered to be good practice and where much of scrutiny's value can be found. Engaging in a policy discussion at a Committee meeting requires the information to be developed to a level suitable for public consumption - by this stage it is often too late for scrutiny to have any real influence and so its value in considering this issue is questionable. By engaging in dialogue with decision makers at an early stage, often informally, O&S can better understand developing policy ideas and isolate areas where it can contribute to the policy – an example of this may be seeking public views on a particular aspect that the Executive would not have capacity to do.
- Much of council work is now of a complex governance nature – involving external delivery bodies, arms-length management bodies or external partners. Regardless of complexity, scrutiny has a responsibility to understand and engage in this. In a recent publication, the Centre for Public Scrutiny recommended that keeping up to speed on complicated service delivery issues is poorly – suited to a traditional committee-type setting. Informal meetings between scrutiny members and those responsible for delivery (particularly partners) will mean that members can more accurately keep a 'watching brief' on how things are – ready to escalate things to scrutiny where necessary. In addition to recommended practice, this model of informal working has been embraced by the Shadow O&S Committee to allow it to keep pace with Shadow activity and identify appropriate items for full committee scrutiny.
- The use of rapporteurs is another tool in scrutiny's informal working options – see principle 2 above and 6 below.

#### **Scrutiny influence**

- Much of the success of scrutiny rests on it having influence within the wider organisation. To have influence, it must also have esteem, and parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny, and how to achieve this, is likely to be a key element of the refreshed scrutiny guidance to be issued by Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government later this year. Whilst there is a council

wide responsibility towards this, scrutiny members themselves must ensure that the work they undertake can add value. Undertaking work in a timely way will be key to realising this value and having influence. A simple example of this may be how scrutiny considers decisions of the executive. Engaging post decision, to retrospectively discuss and pass views on the decision will lead to frustration within the organisation and no influence on the overall decision. Engaging prior to a decision provides scrutiny the opportunity to discuss and make recommendations to the executive on the decision. Engaging at an early stage enables scrutiny to influence the shaping of the decision itself.

## **Agreed Principle 5**

### **Contributes to and reflects the vision and priorities of the new council.**

Recommended reflection of this principle in the O&S structure:

- 16) Scrutiny structure has sufficient capacity to contribute to the development of the new council vision and priorities.
- 17) Scrutiny structure is kept under review and 'built' during the first 18-24 months of the new council's life to ensure that it can properly reflect the council's, and resulting overview and scrutiny, priorities.
- 18) The support of the Centre for Public Scrutiny is sought in a review of the O&S structure as outlined at 17 above, to ensure that O&S members continue to be aware of good working practices in O&S and these are reflected within the function.

Reasons for recommendations -

### **Capacity to contribute to the development of vision and priorities**

- In the early years of the new council's life, much of the council priorities are likely to relate to transformation, which O&S members will want to understand and contribute to. There will be a continuing need to maintain close oversight of the council's financial sustainability, ensure that there is no detriment to service users as a result of the transition to the new council and as with any council, there will be key projects and initiatives that the council is involved in and O&S will want to contribute to. In this context, a commissioning model for scrutiny in the next few years will provide it with the flexibility to determine its own priorities amongst this, rather than be restrained to traditional service based scrutiny which may keep scrutiny busy, but away from the critical areas of council work for that time. Importantly, O&S members with the power to commission work will be in control of this workload and prioritisation.

### **Review and build of structure over 18-24 months**

- Equipping the O&S members with the power to establish its own sub-committees and working groups will ensure that the O&S function can adapt to emerging priorities and accompanying work pressures – see also principle 2 and 'commissioning' above.
- It will not be possible for O&S members to anticipate a fully-fledged ideal structure at this stage for the new council, as the priorities, vision and service areas for this council are not yet known. The support originally offered by Cfps to BCP in its design of scrutiny anticipated a greater opportunity to design, followed by a period of reflection to understand if the function was fit for purpose for the new authority. The stages have been condensed owing to the timescales available, but the gradual building of a new structure post Vesting Day, followed by a review of its effectiveness after approximately 24 months remains a recommendation for members to follow to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- O&S Design members have asked for examples of good practice from BCP members and officers to inform this design. Responses received were considered by the O&S Design Working Group.

Continuing the build and reflection of the O&S function post Vesting Day will allow for further exploration of members insights and examples of good practice, as appropriate.

### **Agreed Principle 6**

**Agile – able to respond to changing and emerging priorities at the right time with flexible working methods.**

Recommended reflection of this principle in the O&S structure:

- 19) Members recognise the value of 'task and finish' style working and provide opportunity and capacity within the structure for a variety of working methods.

Reasons for recommendations –

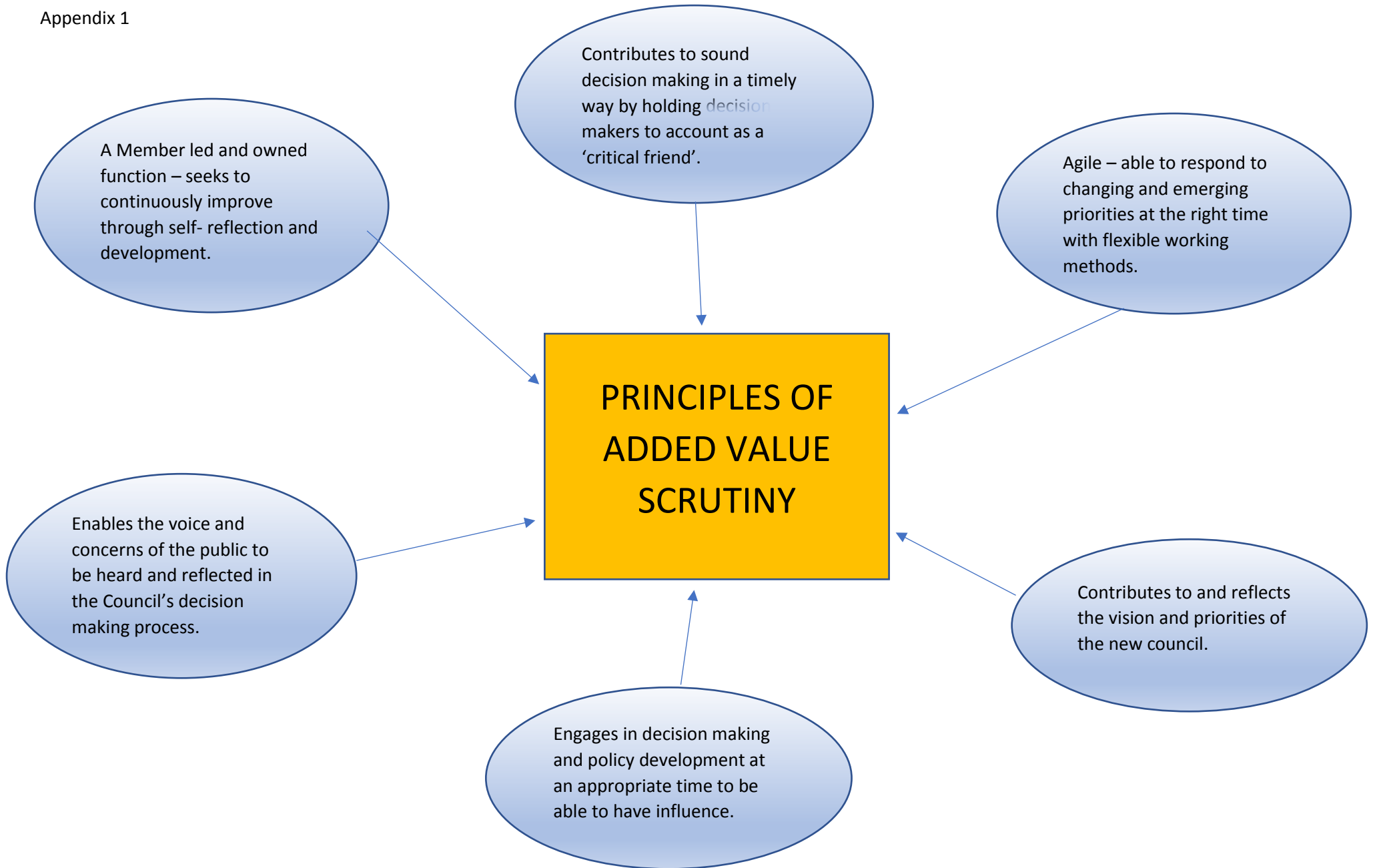
### **Agility**

- Being able to undertake work in a timely way and anticipate a meaningful outcome is key to scrutiny's success. This can be hard to achieve within the restrictions of formal Committee meetings, which may meet every 2-3 months. Scrutiny members may wish to consider an arising issue and contribute a view to the Executive, with a week or two's capacity in which to achieve this. Members may want to talk to service users or members of the public in a targeted session, or hold informal briefings and discussions with officers to better understand a potential issue. Establishing a structure that enables flexible working methods in addition to committee meetings will provide the ideal opportunity for agility. Members should also note that the recent Select Committee review focused on the success to be found in task and finish/ working group styles of scrutiny work, over the traditional committee setting. To facilitate this good practice, the formal structure of committee meetings must be of a suitable number to allow for sufficient officer and member capacity in this respect (see 'Resource' under Principle 1 above). Some examples of scrutiny ways of working are outlined below - members may also have suggestions as to other ways of working that can be considered for the new authority:
- **Working Groups** – a small group of members and officers gathered to consider a specific issue and report back to a full committee, or make recommendations to cabinet with delegated powers, within a limited timescale. Usually meets once or twice, and is often non-public.
- **Sub-Committees** – a group of members delegated a specific aspect of the main committee's work for ongoing, in-depth monitoring. May be time limited or be required as a long- standing committee. Sub-Committees are often well suited to considering performance based matters that require scrutiny oversight. Usually meets in public. A good example of this is the Borough of Poole Sub- Committee, which considered LGR matters on behalf of the Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- **Task and finish groups** – a small group of members tasked with investigating a particular issue and making recommendations on this issue, with the aim of influencing wider council policy. The area

of investigation will be carefully scoped and will culminate in a final report, usually with recommendations to Cabinet or Council. Task and finish groups may work over the course of a number of months and take account of a wide variety of evidence, which can be resource intensive. For this reason the number of these groups must be carefully prioritised by scrutiny members to ensure the work can progress at an appropriate pace for the final outcome to have influence. Many councils will see task and finish groups as the area in which scrutiny can make the most meaningful difference within the whole decision making process.

- **Inquiry Days** – with a similar purpose to task and finish groups, inquiry days seek to understand and make recommendations on an issue by talking to a wide range of stakeholders and considering evidence relating to that issue, within one or two days. Inquiry days have similarities to the work of Government Select Committees. Inquiry days are highly resource intensive but can lead to swift, meaningful outcomes and recommendations that can make a difference to council policy.
- **Rapporteurs or scrutiny member champions**  
Individual members or pairs of members tasked with investigating or maintaining oversight of a particular issue and reporting back to the main committee on its findings. A main committee can use these reports to facilitate its work prioritisation. Rapporteurs will undertake informal work to understand an issue – such as discussions with officers and Portfolio Holders, research and data analysis. Rapporteur work enables O&S members to collectively stay ‘ahead of the game’ in terms of understanding council activity whilst spreading the workload and thus accessing a resource that would otherwise be unachievable. It also avoids valuable committee time being taken up with briefings in favour of more outcome based scrutiny taking place at committee.

Appendix 1



# Appendix 2

**Overview and Scrutiny Board**  
(including all statutory scrutiny responsibilities except Health and Children's Services)  
Meeting Frequency – monthly, tracking Executive  
Membership – 15  
Chairs/ Vice Chairs of other O&S bodies invited to report if they are not already members

**Listening Committee**  
Meeting Frequency – as required  
Membership – 15

**Health and Adult Social Care Committee**  
Meeting Frequency – 6/year  
Membership – 11

**Children's Services Committee**  
Meeting Frequency – 6/year  
Membership – 11

**Commission**  
(Working Group/ T&F group/ Sub- Committee/ Rapporteur)  
Meeting Frequency, membership and public/ non- public status determined at time of commission

**Commission**  
(Working Group/ T&F group/ Sub- Committee/ Rapporteur)  
Meeting Frequency, membership and public/ non- public status determined at time of commission

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(Working Group/ T&F group/ Sub- Committee/ Rapporteur)  
Meeting Frequency, membership and public/ non- public status determined at time of commission

## Suggested Objectives, Measures of Success and Terms of Reference

**Objectives:**

- To provide a mechanism within the decision- making structure for the Council to hear directly from residents in a dedicated space.
- For residents to be able to share their views directly with the Council.
- For residents to see and hear that the Council is listening, understanding and responding to what residents are telling them.
- To provide an opportunity for the Council to work with residents and community groups in shaping the emerging vision and priorities of the new Council.
- To ensure that the Listening Committee is open and accessible to all residents, and that everyone who attends can contribute
- For Overview and Scrutiny to engage the public in its work, particularly inquiry work into a particular subject, through the Listening Committee, with the purpose of shaping policy.
- For Overview and Scrutiny to seek to triangulate information provided to it through other sources by sourcing wider views via the Listening Committee.
- For the Listening Committee to report back on the outcomes related to issues raised.
- To ensure that the Listening Committee and its work operates in a way that uses the opportunities available through the Council's social media channels, website and printed press, with the aim of ensuring that residents and community groups are aware of the opportunity to engage with the Council.
- To seek to understand trends in community issues through ward Councillors raising them to the Committee as appropriate.
- For Councillors to work with community groups in their ward role to assist them in bringing forward issues to the Listening Committee.
- To test the process and learn how to improve going forward.
- For outputs to inform other Council work including policy development, priority setting and the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

**Signs of Success:**

- 1) A wide range of people engage (through attendance and online engagement), including those who are not already speaking with the Council.
- 2) Participants feel comfortable to share with Councillors and with each other.
- 3) All voices are heard.
- 4) Improved trust that residents will be heard.
- 5) Improved confidence in listening to residents.
- 6) Residents receive information useful to them.
- 7) The Council makes use of resident insights and feedback.
- 8) Residents share feedback on the mechanics and aspiration of the Listening Committee including ideas for going forward.

## Terms of Reference

### General

1. The Committee will meet every 2 months, with meetings held in the community where appropriate given the agenda.
2. The Committee will consist of 15 members.
3. The Chair and Vice Chair will be invited to attend meetings of the O&S Board, as non-voting members if they are not also members of the Board, to report on the activity of the Listening Committee. In line with good practice, the Chair and Vice Chair will maintain good dialogue with the lead members of all bodies within the O&S structure.

### Public Participation

4. To receive questions, statements and petitions from members of the public to be submitted in accordance with timescales and process set out in the constitution. This will include opportunities for online submission of issues.
5. To receive, by agreement with the Chairman, presentations from community groups and forums on an issue of public interest or concern. The purpose of this is to provide Overview and Scrutiny with insight into issues at a local level
6. To consider information received at 4 and 5 above and direct action as appropriate. In all cases the Chair has discretion to deal with issues that arise in an agile and appropriate way. This may include but is not limited to:
  - a. a request for officer information to be circulated to Councillors outside of the meeting on the matter raised;
  - b. a request that the community group undertakes further work on a matter or work with other groups in order to further an issue, and report back to the Council at a later date;
  - c. a request for an officer report to be received at a forthcoming meeting, or other O&S body as appropriate;
  - d. a request for the relevant Portfolio Holder to address the Committee (or other O&S body as appropriate) and member of the public, on the matter raised;
  - e. delegation to the Chairman of the Committee to discuss the matter further with officers and report back to a future meeting on proposed action;
  - f. a request to the Overview and Scrutiny Board that the matter be considered with a view to commissioning additional O&S work (eg. a Sub-Committee, Task and Finish Group, Working Group or Rapporteur on the matter);
7. In all cases, the outcome at 6 above will be supplied to the member of public or community group. An invitation will also be extended to the member of the public or group to attend a future meeting where the matter is to be considered further.
8. Opportunities for the public to engage in meetings of the Committee will be advertised on the Council's social media channels and in the Council's printed press. In their ward role, Councillors will also promote this opportunity.
9. Each agenda will include an item to allow for Councillors to raise known ward issues to the Committee.

## **Council led engagement**

10. The Council may consult the public, its groups and communities via the Committee, on issues of importance and to inform policy shaping. This may include but is not limited to:
  - a. consultation on the proposed work programme of Overview and Scrutiny to ensure it reflects community need;
  - b. the seeking of residents' and service user views in a 'call for evidence' to inform Overview and Scrutiny inquiries;
  - c. consultation on the vision and priorities of the Council.
11. Where a final report or policy is produced in response to information sought at 10 above, those members of the public who have engaged with the Council in this respect will be informed of the outcome.