

**To: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
20 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**Scrutiny Health Check
Executive Director: Delivery – Democratic and Registration Services**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The new structure of officer support for Overview and Scrutiny has been in place since May 2018 and officers have been working with scrutiny members to review current working practices.
- 1.2 As part of this process it was identified that it would be beneficial for an independent audit to be undertaken to provide advice and guidance to refocus the scrutiny process for both officers and members. As recognised experts Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) have been approached to deliver this in Autumn 2018.

2 Supporting Information

- 2.1 The CfPS Scrutiny Health Check is based on a proven evaluation model that works with each council to identify both process, capacity, member engagement and cultural issues that can affect scrutiny performance.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Health Check is:
- A short, focused and inclusive process
 - Results driven to ensure sustained improvement
 - External and authoritative gaining internal buy-in
 - Supported delivery - not just analysis and diagnostics
 - A planned and structured way to improve
 - Member led and CfPS supported
- 2.3 The scope of the CfPS Health Check is to review:
- The effectiveness of scrutiny
 - Checking the shared vision for scrutiny
 - The challenge provided to the Executive by scrutiny
 - The work programme – how items are selected and prioritised
 - Use of officer time and resources required to adequately support scrutiny
 - The councillor resources required to prepare for and attend scrutiny meetings
 - The structure and remit / focus of the scrutiny Task & Finish groups
 - The scrutiny of external partners and contracts
 - The quality and robustness of scrutiny
 - The links between scrutiny and corporate strategy priorities
 - The skills of Chairman and Vice Chairman and the members of their Panels
- 2.4 The process followed will be:
- Identification of good examples, review of other scrutiny reviews, latest national guidance, select committee recommendations, a reflection on Council's current priorities / future work, reflection on resources, review of terms of reference for

each group, review of work programmes past and future, review of call-ins and review of recent task and finish groups.

- Survey of scrutiny members aiming to establish what works well and not so well, and assess their experiences of scrutiny including the quality of reports, presentations, debate and officer support.
- Discussions with officers supporting and engaged in Scrutiny.
- Audit of councillors' scrutiny skills to establish whether councillors have the correct skills to undertake effective scrutiny and identify what training is required post 2019 election.
- Present findings in a report with recommendations and a feedback workshop with members/officers.

3 Equalities Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Part of the evaluation model will be to assess both that an appropriate range of Councillors are engaged in the review itself but also in scrutiny activities at Bracknell Forest.

4 Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 4.1 Without undertaking regular reviews of services the Council risks not maintaining skills and best practice for both elected members and officers supporting scrutiny. This investment of £3,200 for delivering sustained improvement is a demonstration of the Council's ongoing commitment to the scrutiny process.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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