

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Council
Date: 16 July 2014
Report for: For approval
Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation and Resources/Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Report Title

Scrutiny Arrangements

Summary

The report sets out recommendations about the operation of Scrutiny Committees following the abolition of the role of Scrutiny Topic Group Chairmen at the Annual Meeting.

Recommendation(s)

1. That Scrutiny Topic Groups be abolished and that the arrangements for dealing with issues be decided upon by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
2. That the Director of Legal and Democratic Services make any necessary constitutional changes as a result of these changes.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Peter Forrester, Democratic and Performance Services Manager

Extension: 1815

Background Papers:

None

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council agreed the current model for Scrutiny at its meeting on 19 September 2012. This model included the formation of four Topic Groups with a Chairman who was paid an allowance to lead the work of the Group.

1.2 The role of Topic Group Chairman was abolished at the Annual Meeting on the 11 June and the Council asked for a report on future arrangements to be brought to this meeting.

1.3 Topic Groups were intended to be Member led and adopted a work programme in October 2012. They completed reviews and work on the following:

- Review of Doorstep Crime
- Review of Community Asset Framework
- Review of Investment in Street Lighting
- Review of Environmental Enforcement
- Secondary school place sufficiency review
- Review of Cycling in Trafford
- Dignity Review

2.0 Proposed Way of Working

2.1 The abolition of the Topic Group Chairman role provides an opportunity to review the approach. The main principle behind the Topic Group model was that they could respond flexibly and quickly to issues rather than do long and detailed pieces of work. A number of the reviews above, were short, focused reviews involving a group of interested members. This model can be carried forward.

2.2 The proposed future model of operation is:

- The general principle is that Scrutiny Committees should be flexible in their approach and consider issues at the most appropriate and relevant time.
- Scrutiny Committees should prepare an overview work programme for the year at their first meeting. This will include any significant items on the horizon and any follow up issues. However, the work programme should provide sufficient capacity for ad hoc and current issues to be added to the agenda as and when they arise.
- Scrutiny Committees should be free to decide the most appropriate approach to their consideration of items. Some items may be best dealt with at a full Committee or a special meeting. Others might be best dealt with by a few Members in a “task and finish” group. The outputs should generally be short and to the point to have maximum impact, although there might be occasions where a longer report is felt to be necessary.

2.3 The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be responsible for developing the work programme and recommending the most appropriate way of considering items. Scrutiny support work will continue to be provided by Democratic Services and the service is developing a more flexible working model to achieve this.

2.4 The proposals outlined above will require some changes to the procedure rules and scrutiny protocols and it is recommended that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make any necessary amendments as a result of these changes.