

STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 26 April 2017

Present: Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

Councillors WJ Davies P Stuart
D Elderton C Meaden (In place of RL Abbey)
G Ellis B Mooney (In place of B Kenny)
P Gilchrist

In Attendance: Independent Members Mr B Cummings, Mr C Jones and Professor R Jones

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors R Abbey, C Blakeley and B Kenny.

30 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

31 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2016, be approved.

32 REVIEW OF SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Chair introduced the report of the Assistant Director: Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer) that set out the proposal considered by the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Working Group on 19 April 2017 to divide the remit of the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee to create two new committees - one with a remit for adult social care and health and another with a remit for children and families. The report informed that the new committees would incorporate the functions, the pledges, supporting strategies and associated delivery areas of the People theme of the Wirral Plan.

The report further informed that the proposed names of these committees be:

- **Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**
- **Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee** (note: the current education co-optees on the People O&S Committee to become members of the Children & Families O&S Committee).

The Chair reported to the Committee on a variety of issues that had been considered by the Working Group as detailed in the report. These included reporting arrangements, officer resources, dealing with cross-cutting themes and the impact on political proportionalities. The Chair further informed that subsequent to the meeting of the Working Group additional work had been undertaken to review the overall impact on political proportionality arising from the recommendation to reduce the size of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees from 15 to 11 Members, thereby reducing the total number of Committee places overall. The Working Group had not been aware of these implications to other Council Committees when it had made its recommendations.

Members noted that at the present time it would be appropriate to retain the Overview and Scrutiny Committee membership at 15 Elected Members (and existing arrangements for co-opted members). The Assistant Director: Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer) proposed that further detailed investigation into political proportionalities be undertaken by the Working Group as part of its 2017/18 Work Programme.

The Chair informed that retaining the Overview and Scrutiny membership at 15 Elected Members for all 4 Committees would enable as many Councillors as possible to be involved in the Scrutiny function. Members of the Committee concurred, stating the importance of effective Scrutiny and that it was sensible to maintain the larger pool of Scrutiny Members to draw from for Task and Finish Groups.

The Chair reiterated a number of additional points raised in the Working Group's discussion namely the Special Responsibility Allowance to be paid to all Scrutiny Chairs (if applicable under the Members' Allowance Scheme) and that Chairs / Vice-Chairs / Spokespersons would continue to meet on a regular basis to allocate scrutiny work that may cut across the responsibility of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Assistant Director: Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer) reminded Members that the Committee's recommendations, including new Terms of Reference for the two new Overview and Scrutiny Committees, changes to the Constitution and amended Calendar of Meetings (as detailed in the report's appendices), would be considered by Council.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – That:

- (1) the remit of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be divided to create two new Committees - Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee;**
- (2) membership of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees be set at 15 Elected Members on a ratio of 9, 5, 1 (note: existing education co-opted members be appointed to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee);**
- (3) the impact on the political proportionalities arising from future changes to the membership of the revised Overview and Scrutiny Committee Structure be reviewed by the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee as part of its 2017/18 Work Programme;**
- (4) relevant Financial and Performance Reporting relating to each Committee be provided;**
- (5) the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) payable to People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair be paid to the Chairs of Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny and Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committees;**
- (6) all Chairs / Vice-Chairs / Spokespersons continue to meet on a regular basis to allocate scrutiny work that may cut across the responsibility of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
- (7) the Council's Calendar of Meetings be revised to incorporate changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Structure and recommended to Council for adoption; and**
- (8) the Council's Constitution be updated accordingly and be recommended to the Council for adoption.**