

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD– 5th MARCH 2012

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

REPORT OF SCRUTINY GROUP SPECIALIST

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To enable the Scrutiny Management Board to consider proposed changes to the Scrutiny arrangements and agree the changes for further consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Management Board agrees the proposed Scrutiny Committee structure and membership as set out in Section 5.1 for consultation with the Scrutiny Assembly and Town & Parish Councils.
- 2.2 That Scrutiny Management Board agrees the proposal and terms to invite the Parish Forum to elect a Town & Parish Council representative for each Scrutiny Committee, excepting the Scrutiny Management Board as set out in Section 6.
- 2.3 That the Scrutiny Management Board notes the process and timetable for making changes as set out in Section 7.5.

3.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 3.1 N/A

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 The current scrutiny arrangements have been in place since Annual Council in May 2011. Under the current arrangements, there are five service-themed Scrutiny Committees (Adult Social Care, Budget & Finance, Children & Young People, Co-operative & Communities and Health) and a Scrutiny Management Board which has overall responsibility for over sight of the scrutiny function and delivery of the work programme.

- 4.2 Throughout the year, the Scrutiny Chairmen have been formally and informally evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the scrutiny structure and arrangements and have identified two key areas for improvement.
- 4.3 The Scrutiny Chairman is therefore proposing changes to the scrutiny arrangements as follows:
- 4.3.1 The merger of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees, and the establishment of a new Housing, Economy and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.3.2 To invite Town & Parish Councils to elect a representative to sit on each Scrutiny Committee, except the Scrutiny Management Board.
- 4.4 The rationale and proposed process for making these changes are set out below.

5.0 CHANGES TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Under the proposals, the number of scrutiny committees would remain the same, but there would be two changes:

- 5.1.1 The merger of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees into one **Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee**. There is a clear duplication of work between the two committees which is only likely to increase as the NHS reforms bring about closer integration of health and adult care services. A merger would create one stronger, more focused committee and would make more efficient use of both member and officer resources.

There are currently 8 elected members on the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee and 6 elected members on the Health Scrutiny Committee. It is proposed that there would be eight elected members on the Committee.

- 5.1.2 The establishment of a new **Housing, Economy and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee**. It has been recognised that there are gaps within the existing Scrutiny Committee structure. Key areas of Council activity in housing, economic development, regeneration, environment and transport do not currently fall within the remit of one of the existing Committees. Scrutiny of these issues is currently incorporated into the Scrutiny Management Board's work programme which has limited its capacity either to play a full strategic role for the Scrutiny function, or to conduct reviews requiring in depth or follow-up work.

The new Scrutiny Committee would allow for more effective scrutiny of issues within the defined areas by a dedicated Committee, and would free up capacity within the Scrutiny Management Board to take on a more strategic function.

It is proposed that there would be eight elected members on the Committee.

- 5.2 Membership of the Scrutiny Management Board which would remain unchanged.
- 5.3 The proposed changes would result in a net increase of 2 elected member positions on the Scrutiny Committees.
- 5.4 Appendix 1 shows the existing scrutiny structure and the proposed structure.

6.0 RECRUITMENT OF TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Chairmen have expressed a desire to develop closer links between scrutiny and the Town & Parish Councils. This is consistent with the Co-operative Council priority to give local people greater involvement in planning and running Council services, accepting that scrutiny is an influencing but not a decision making body.
- 6.2 Currently, Town & Parish Councils are invited to make suggestions for the Scrutiny Work Programme and councillors may attend scrutiny meetings along with other members of the public, but there are no recognised links between scrutiny and the Town & Parish Councils.
- 6.2 It is proposed that Town & Parish Councils are invited to elect one representative to sit on each Scrutiny Committee, excluding the Scrutiny Management Board.
- 6.3 Criteria will be applied to the Town & Parish Council representatives:
 - They may not be borough ward Members.
 - They should represent the interests of all Town & Parish Councils and not the individual interests of their own parish. However, issues may legitimately be raised where the issue also affects several other wards in the borough.
 - They may bring appropriate issues to scrutiny as suggestions for the work programme. Provision to do this already exists, but a more formal working relationship is likely to enhance opportunities for the Town & Parish Councils to influence the work programme.

Decisions about the work programme remain with the Scrutiny Management Board and appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

- Representatives may feed back about scrutiny to the Parish Forum.
- They may ask questions and take part in scrutiny meetings, but will not have voting rights.
- They should ideally have an interest in, or knowledge of, the services within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee on which they sit so that they add to the skills and experience of the borough ward members and other co-optees on the Committee.

6.3 The proposal will not affect the position of existing Co-optees who are Town or Parish Councillors and who have been co-opted onto scrutiny for their individual skills and expertise.

6.4 There is currently no identified budget for paying allowances to Town & Parish Council representatives on the Scrutiny Committees.

6.5 The process and timetable for the recruitment of Town & Parish Council representatives is set out below.

7. PROCESS AND TIMETABLE FOR MAKING THE CHANGES

7.1 The Council's Constitution sets out that there will be a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 Scrutiny Committees including the Scrutiny Management Board.

7.2 Subject to this provision, the Scrutiny Management Board may make changes to the scrutiny structure and processes after consulting with the Scrutiny Assembly. The Scrutiny Chairman will report changes to the next full Council meeting. The Scrutiny Handbook will be updated to reflect the changes.

7.3 Appointments to the Scrutiny Committees will be made at Annual Council.

7.4 The process and timetable for making the proposed changes above is set out below.

5 th March	Scrutiny Management Board	Scrutiny Management Board to consider and agree changes to the scrutiny arrangements for consultation with the Scrutiny Assembly and Town & Parish Councils.
5 th March – 31 st March	Scrutiny Assembly	Consultation by e-mail with the Scrutiny Assembly and Town & Parish Councils.

		If there is sufficient demand, a Scrutiny Assembly meeting may be held during this period.
Mid-April 2012 (tbc)	Scrutiny Management Board	Scrutiny Management Board to consider feedback arising from the consultation and agree the final structure and arrangements as consulted on. The agreed structure will be confirmed to Town & Parish Councils so that they may nominate representatives for election at the Parish Forum meeting in June. A “job description” and “person spec” will be provided. Following the meeting the Scrutiny team will update the Scrutiny Handbook as required for consultation and approval by the Scrutiny Management Board at a future meeting.
3 rd May	Full Council	Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Board to report the changes to Full Council.
24 th May	Annual Council	Appointment of Members to Scrutiny Committees.
Mid-June 2012 (tbc)	Parish Forum	Election of TPC representatives, with immediate effect.

7.5 Further work arising from these proposals includes:

- Review of the statutory designations of the Scrutiny Committees
- Amendment of documents relating to the co-opted members of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Induction of Town & Parish Council representatives.

8. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

There are no specific equal opportunity issues arising from this report. All Town & Parish Councils will be given the opportunity to nominate representatives to the Scrutiny Committees.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The environmental impact is limited to additional car journeys made by increasing the number of people travelling to meetings.

9. LEGAL COMMENT

Section 21(10) of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that a Scrutiny Committee can include members who are not elected Members of the Authority. Such members cannot vote unless a scheme is made in accordance with Schedule 1 Paragraph 12 to the Act.

10. LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The proposal to invite Town & Parish Council representatives to the Scrutiny Committees is in line with the Co-operative Council priorities to involve partners and local people in the planning and running of services.

11. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

The proposals are intended to improve the effectiveness of Scrutiny and to increase involvement of partners – the Town & Parish Councils – in the process.

There is a risk that the lack of an allowance for the Town & Parish Council representatives could be a barrier to participation.

There is a risk that the representatives bring individual parish matters to scrutiny.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Additional costs will be incurred should the decision be taken to pay the Town & Parish Council representatives a Co-optees allowance. This will total £1,300 per annum and will need to be met from the members allowances budget.

MLB 24.02.12

13. WARD IMPLICATIONS

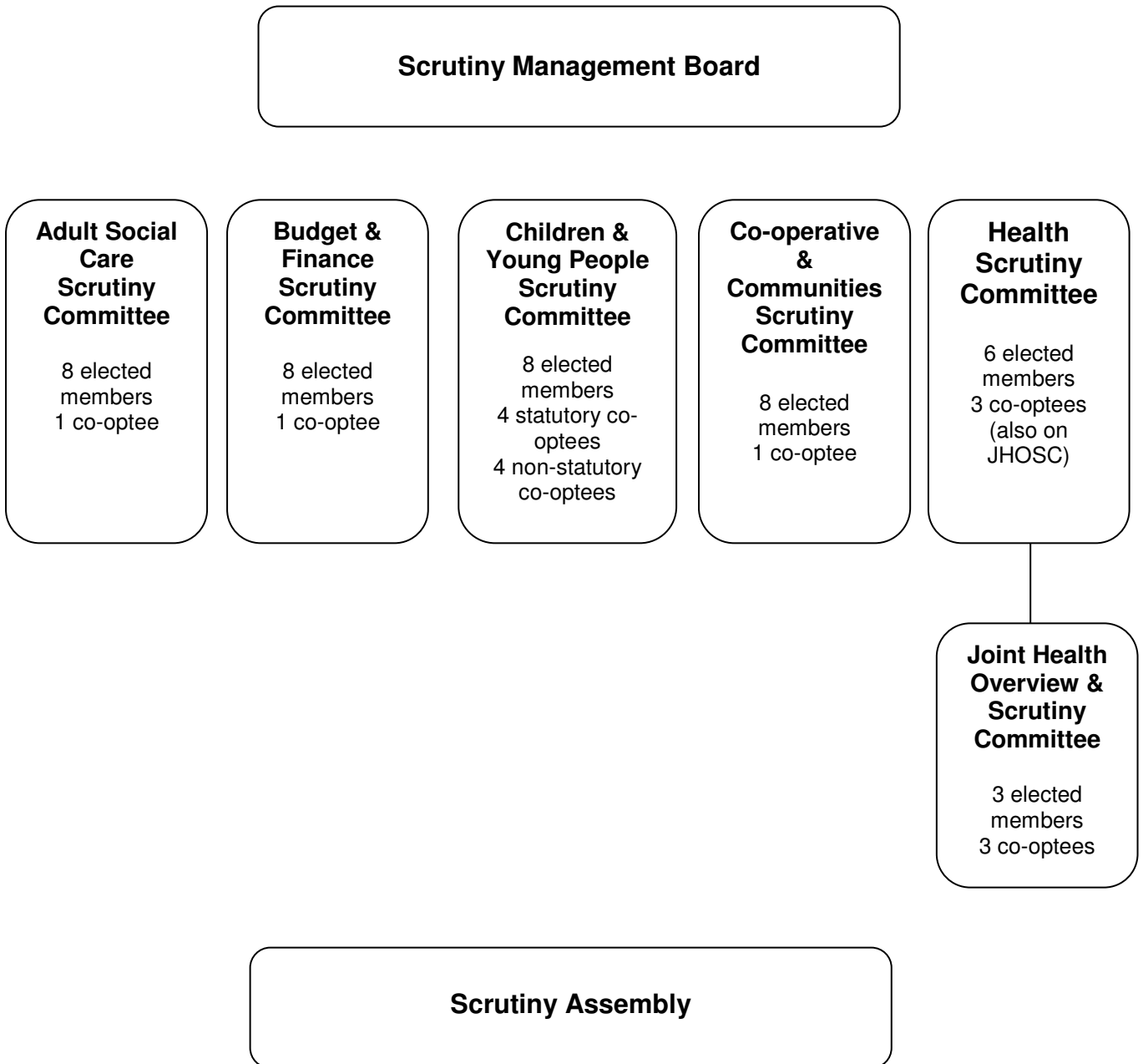
There are no ward specific implications arising from this report.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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EXISTING STRUCTURE



PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Scrutiny Management Board (strategic oversight)

- Setting the priorities for scrutiny and oversight of the work programme
- Evaluation and performance monitoring - quantitative and qualitative
- Allocation of resources
- Allocation of new scrutiny suggestions
- Legislation updates
- Scrutiny Reports
- Determining Scrutiny Assembly meetings
- Review issues of strategic importance

No change

Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee

8 elected members
4 co-optees

Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee

No change*

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

No change*

Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee

No change*

Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee

(Incorporating regeneration, environment, transport)

8 elected members

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

No change

Scrutiny Assembly

No change

No change* - excluding potential TPC representative.