

Council Meeting – 13 December 2012

Extract from Constitution Committee Minutes – 26 November 2012

COUNCIL GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered a report on proposed changes to the governance arrangements of the Council, which gave effect to the decision taken at the Annual Council meeting in May 2012.

The report recommended changes to the Council's scrutiny structure and the establishment of new policy development groups.

Six new policy development groups would be established which would play a central role in the Council's decision-making processes. The groups would actively involve backbench Members on a cross-party basis, giving them a key role in the formulation of policy. They would operate closely with both scrutiny committees and the Cabinet, both being informed by and informing the work of those bodies. The groups would hold some meetings in private, particularly in the initial stages, but would also meet regularly in public to ensure open accountability for their decisions.

The number, focus and role of the scrutiny committees would change. There would be three scrutiny committees focussing on the way the Council works as a service commissioner and deliverer, as well as on health and wellbeing and community safety.

Further details of the proposals were set out in the report and its appendices.

RESOLVED

That Council be recommended to agree that

- (1) the arrangements set out in the report be adopted with immediate effect;
- (2) the new Policy Development Groups referred to in the report be formally established, with the terms of reference and compositions as set out in Appendices A and E to this report;
- (3) the new Scrutiny Committees referred to in the report be formally established, with the terms of reference and compositions as set out in Appendices D and E to this report, and that the existing Council scrutiny structure be dissolved;
- (4) the terms of reference of the Policy Development Groups and Scrutiny Committees, and the operation of the Policy Development Groups, be reviewed after six months;

- (5) when a Policy Development Group meets to agree its formal recommendations to Cabinet, the meeting be held in public and be open to all Members of the Council;
- (6) the membership of each Policy Development Group be noted and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each Policy Development Group be formally appointed to those offices, as set out in Appendix E;
- (7) the membership of each Scrutiny Committee be noted and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each Scrutiny Committee be formally appointed, as circulated at the meeting; and
- (8) the Borough Solicitor be authorised to make such changes to the Council's Constitution as she determines are necessary to give effect to the wishes of Council.