

Appendix A - Scrutiny – Key Findings from the Governance Review

Interviews:

Interview	Summary	Improvements to Scrutiny
<b>Cabinet Members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-decision scrutiny is not being used effectively;</li> <li>• There is a natural defensiveness over call-in, members cannot impact decisions effectively with call-in;</li> <li>• Scrutiny has done it's job and is now stale, as a result there is a lack of interest in scrutiny;</li> <li>• The principles of scrutiny as a system of checks and balances is good, but it is not being used effectively;</li> <li>• The value of cross-party input is before the decision is made through pre-decision scrutiny, not once the decision has been made through call-in;</li> <li>• Members need to have a clearer understanding of the role of scrutiny in order to really use it effectively;</li> <li>• Scrutiny is being misused too often to score political points, and being overshadowed by political agenda;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective pre-scrutiny can be used to better engage members</li> <li>• Programme of training to educate members on the role of scrutiny and the tools available for members to influence decisions</li> <li>• Members need to be proactive – it is up to members to add key decisions to the agenda not the Cabinet member;</li> <li>• Cross party collaboration between Cabinet and Scrutiny would provide better value to the decision makers - but is it for Cabinet to lead the scrutiny agenda?</li> <li>• Have one committee to scrutinise cabinet decisions and one committee to provide the overview;</li> <li>• Scrutiny is member driven should be proactive, rethink the format of meetings, bring back Officers and external people;</li> </ul>
<b>Members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much focus on scrutiny and not enough overview;</li> <li>• Scrutiny chairman are not being held to account – they need to have a clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be a more proactive and effective use of pre-decision scrutiny and should not be Cabinet led;</li> <li>• Chairmanship should not be the same as the</li> </ul>

	<p>understanding of their role;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-scrutiny meetings hold too much influence members are 'dragged' along and therefore challenge is difficult;</li> <li>• Scrutiny reports have not impact, as a result members feel as though they have not been involved or had any influence over decision making;</li> </ul>	<p>administration;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of chairmanship should be improved;</li> <li>• Better programmed training for new members to provide better induction and better continuous professional development;</li> <li>• There needs to be improved training over the role of scrutiny;</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Officers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-decision scrutiny is the most effective way to influence decision making and it is not being used effectively;</li> <li>• Scrutiny is not having the right impact – decisions are not being influenced / changed;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the appetite for pre-decision scrutiny to allow the Committee to actually influence decisions – and choose the right decisions;</li> <li>• Reduce to one scrutiny committee – with support from individual working groups – to allow adequate overview and scrutiny;</li> <li>• Re-consider the format of meetings, and adopt more innovate and flexible Officer reports and interviews;</li> <li>• Reduce scrutiny from 3 committees to one;</li> <li>• Improve collaboration between Cabinet and scrutiny</li> <li>• Improve the accountability of scrutiny recommendations and implement a system to capture and recommendations and report on the actions taken;</li> <li>• Improve the understanding and quality of the chairmanship;</li> <li>• Members should be proactive to be involved in decision before they are made;</li> </ul>

## Member Survey

Question	Thinking about the present Cabinet and Leader System what do you like and/or dislike?	How could the present system be improved
<b>Key Points</b>	<p>Liked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed of decision making</li> <li>• Ability to be decisive</li> <li>• Allows clear strategic direction</li> <li>• Efficiency of decision making</li> </ul> <p>Dislike:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of transparency</li> <li>• Not enough members involved in decision making</li> <li>• Undemocratic</li> <li>• Disempowerment of ward councillors and their residents</li> </ul>	<p>Greater pre-decision involvement</p> <p>More input from Members</p> <p>More use of the scrutiny system</p> <p>Better forward planning of decision making</p> <p>More consultation</p>

### From the Member workshop

#### Feedback on the systems of governance:

- Cllr Paine – Being a Cabinet member can be isolating – a hybrid system would improve member involvement;
- The current system allows for quick/snap decisions (that need to be made quickly) to be made;
- Cllr Ash – The speed of the cabinet process can result in decisions being made too quickly without effective challenge;
- Group discussion – Weakness of the current system is that not enough members are or feel like they are involved;
- Members lack sufficient knowledge and expertise – “jack of all trades but master of none”;
- Too much focus on scrutiny, and not enough overview – reports and recommendations are not revisited;
- The committee system led to more decision being made a full Council;
- The Council needs to make the right decision, not a financial decision;
- The system must not eliminate the overview side of the decision process (such as research). Would this be lost in a Committee system?

Accountability:

- Perception that Cabinet members are not being held to account;
- Scrutiny chairmen are not being held to account
- Cllr Paine: In a committee system would you get a decision made? And would there be clear accountability of that decision?