

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL – 12TH DECEMBER 2017

### Report of the Head of Strategic Support

#### ITEM 11 FUTURE OPERATION OF PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

##### Purpose of the Report

To report back to the Panel discussions held with the current Chair of the Panel considering ways in which it could improve its scrutiny of the performance of the Council, and fulfil its functions.

##### Actions Requested

The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report and agree the following two recommendations:

- a. to submit the quarterly Performance Monitoring reports to the Panel for its consideration within eight weeks after the end of each quarter, starting from the next Council year;
- b. that the Panel seek approval from the Scrutiny Management Board for them to consider and monitor the performance of major policies approximately half way through the periods they relate to, and raise any issues or concerns with the Board as required.

##### Reason

After consulting with the relevant officers, the Chair wishes the Panel to consider two ways in which it could improve its scrutiny of the performance of the Council, and fulfil its functions.

##### Background

At the meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Panel held on 10th October 2017 the previous Chair discussed with members of the Panel some options he wished to consider that could improve the operation of the Panel. Matters were discussed as follows:

- *that the Performance Monitoring report had previously been submitted to the Panel for its consideration up to four months after the end of the Quarter which affected the Panel's ability to effectively monitor the performance of some of the indicators and recommend ways in which the performance could be improved in a timely manner.*
- *that if an eight meeting cycle was introduced, with two meetings held one month apart, the Panel could identify issues it considered required investigation within the Performance Monitoring report at the first meeting. Members of the Panel would then explore these issues with relevant officers and report back to the Panel at its next meeting to consider best practices and how the issues could be resolved.*

- *that the introduction of a 'local issues' section at the end of the agenda whereby members of Panel could submit a paragraph to the Chair for inclusion on the agenda under Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.10(a) would enable the Panel to identify issues that could be of wider concern to the Borough. In the past a local issue had been raised in a different forum, which had resulted in the creation of a Scrutiny Panel and the Council improving its performance, so there could be benefit to implementing this process. It would be structured tightly to ensure that issues raised were not discussed in detail but only identified as requiring further scrutiny.*
- *that the three corporate themes of the Corporate Plan were divided between the Members of the Panel for Members to shadow the relevant teams and to benchmark best practices at other local authorities in relation to these topics. If issues were identified within these themes the Panel Members would be able to provide advice and knowledge to support the Panels' understanding and scrutiny.*
- *although policies were reviewed by the Policy Scrutiny Group in accordance with the Council's forward programme of policies and strategies to identify potential items for future scrutiny, the Panel should consider scrutinising the performance of these policies and their related Action Plans to recommend amendments to policies to improve their function. Recommendations arising from its scrutiny could be forwarded to the Scrutiny Management Board.*
- *The Panel would always be scrutinising the performance of the Council in retrospect and whether there was added value to scrutinising performance closer to the end of each quarter. It was possible that problems would be identified earlier enabling them to be resolved quickly.*
- *There were other methods already in place to identify Ward issues that could be of wider concern, and the introduction of a 'local issues' section could result in detailed discussions.*
- *Whether the Performance Monitoring report could be amended to enable a quantifiable comparison of data and to allow for trending with the previous Quarters' data.*
- *When was an appropriate time during the review cycle of a policy for the Panel to scrutinise its performance in relation to the schedule of the Policy Scrutiny Group.*
- *Whether the Council benchmarked their performance with other local authorities and how this information was presented to the Panel.*

*(draft minute 28, PSP 10 October 2017)*

The resolutions were agreed as follows:

- (a) the submission of the Performance Monitoring report to the Panel for its consideration within four weeks or as soon as practically possible after the end of the Quarter;*
- (b) the introduction of an eight meeting cycle, whereby two meetings are held one month apart to allow for members of the Panel to identify concerns within the Performance Monitoring report and investigate these concerns prior to the next meeting;*
- (c) the introduction of a 'local issues' section at the end of the agenda whereby members of Panel can submit a paragraph to the Chair for inclusion on the*

*agenda under Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.10(a) to enable the Panel to identify whether it's a wider concern to the Borough;*

- (d) the three corporate themes of the Corporate Plan be divided between the Members of the Panel for Members to shadow relevant teams and to benchmark best practices at other local authorities in relation to these topics;*
  - (e) that the Panel consider and monitor the performance of policies and pass the learning up to the Scrutiny Management Board as required.*
- 2. that the Chair and Vice-chair, with the relevant officers, present their findings to the Panel at its meeting scheduled to be held on 12th December 2017.*

### Consideration of the options

Since the meeting of the Panel on 10th October 2017 there has been a reorganisation of the Council's membership of committees, which has resulted in the Chair of the Scrutiny Performance Panel changing. The Head of Strategic Support and the Democratic Services Officer consulted the new Chair to discuss the suggestions made by the former Chair and their considerations are noted below.

**The submission of the Performance Monitoring report to the Panel for its consideration within four weeks or as soon as practically possible after the end of the Quarter.**

Summary of discussions: having considered the steps required to provide data in the Performance Monitoring report, officers indicated that 8 weeks after the end of the Quarter was likely to be the shortest duration possible for submission considering the current process steps. Any shorter period than this would likely result in some data being unavailable, or potentially inaccurate due to it being based on unverified estimates. It was suggested that the dates of the Panel meetings for 2018-2019 council year are agreed with this in mind.

**The introduction of an eight meeting cycle, whereby two meetings are held one month apart to allow for members of the Panel to identify concerns within the Performance Monitoring report and investigate these concerns prior to the next meeting;**

Summary of discussions: to recommend to the Panel that it continues with the current arrangements, as it was felt that the current arrangements whereby Heads of Service and Cabinet Lead Members are present to answer questions on 'red' indicators was satisfactory.

**The introduction of a 'local issues' section at the end of the agenda whereby members of Panel can submit a paragraph to the Chair for inclusion on the agenda under Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.10(a) to enable the Panel to identify whether it's a wider concern to the Borough;**

Summary of discussions: to recommend to the Panel that this is not implemented, as it was not part of the remit of the Panel which should be considering performance of the Council at a strategic level rather than local ward issues. Also, not all wards are represented by councillors who are members of the Panel.

**The three corporate themes of the Corporate Plan be divided between the Members of the Panel for Members to shadow relevant teams and to benchmark best practices at other local authorities in relation to these topics;**

Summary of discussions: to recommend that this is not implemented, as it could be seen as a duplication of the role of Cabinet Lead Members, who can be requested to attend Panel meetings as and when required.

**That the Panel consider and monitor the performance of policies and pass the learning up to the Scrutiny Management Board as required.**

Summary of discussions: to recommend that major policies are reviewed for their performance at a mid-term point in relation to the individual review cycle of each policy, and that the Panel consider building this into their work programme if approved by SMB.

Background papers:           None

Appendix:                       Quarterly Performance Timetable

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**APPENDIX**

**Quarterly Performance Reporting Timetable 2017- 2018 – current timeframes**  
 (Showing steps required and time taken from end of quarter to meeting date)

End of Quarter	Data inputted by	Email sent to CMT to alert them data inputted	Escalation	Improvement and Organisational Development review and challenge	SMT submission and alert CMT	SMT	SMT Report updated and circulated to CMT / SMT	PP Draft Report Circulated	PP Final Report Circulated	Performance Panel Meeting Date	
<b>Q1</b>	30/06	14/07/17	14/07/17	14/07/17-21/07/17	25/07/17-03/08/17	30/06/17	05/07/17	05/07-14/07	14/07/17	27/07/17	22/08/17 (5 wk)
<b>Q2</b>	30/09	14/10/17	14/10/17	14/10/17-23/10/17	24/10/17-12/11/17	13/11/17	18/11/17	23/11/17	24/11/17	30/11/17	12/12/17 (13 wk)
<b>Q3</b>	31/12	14/01/18	14/01/18	14/01/18-22/01/18	23/01/18-08/02/18	09/02/18	14/02/18	20/03/18	21/03/18	27/03/18	10/04/18 (12wk)
<b>Q4</b>	31/03	14/04/18	14/04/18	14/04/18-23/04/18	24/04/18-01/06/18	02/06/18*	06/06/18*	13/06/18*	18/06/18*	25/06/18*	03/07/18** (13 wk)

\*Dates not yet agreed with SMT for new year

\*\*Date not yet approved (to be confirmed by Full Council in Jan 2018)

**Quarterly Performance Reporting Timetable 2017- 2018 – suggested example for Q2**

(Showing steps required and proposed time taken - 8 weeks - from end of quarter to proposed meeting date)

End of Quarter		Data inputted by	Email sent to CMT to alert them data inputted	Escalation	Improvement and Organisational Development review and challenge	SMT submission and alert CMT	SMT	SMT Report updated and circulated to CMT / SMT	PP Draft Report Circulated	PP Final Report Circulated	Suggested Performance Panel Meeting Date
Q2	30/09	14/10/17	16/10/17	16/10/17-20/10/17	23/10/17-27/10/17 (1wk)	27/10/17	01/11/17	01/11-15/11	15/11/17	21/11/17	28/11/17 (8wk)