

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Restructure of Overview and Scrutiny
Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Date: 10 April 2013
Cabinet Member: Councillor Peter Smith
CMT Member: Chief Executive (Tracey Lee)
Author: Giles Perritt, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships
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Ref:

Key Decision: No

Part: I

Purpose of the report:

This report proposes a restructure of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and its panels to improve effectiveness. The proposals modernise the Overview and Scrutiny Function and bring them in line with the Council's priorities. This report details the proposed recommendations for consideration at City Council on 22 April 2013 and includes new terms of reference for each panel.

Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015:

Effective Overview and Scrutiny impacts upon all of our corporate priorities by providing a process for challenge to decision making and development of policy. It is also one of the ways the Council should monitor performance and demonstrate to the Community that it is spending their money effectively on the services and issues important to the city.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land:

The proposals decreases the number of Panels and the number of business meetings, consequently there will be a need to realign support to the Scrutiny Management Board and its panels. The Proposal will impact upon members allowance as a result of the proposal to reduce the number of non-chair members.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

There is a risk that by not making changes to Overview and Scrutiny the Council will be ineffective in challenging decision-making and monitoring the performance of the Cabinet.

Equality and Diversity:

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

Recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board recommend to Council that -

1. A new scrutiny structure is approved (as detailed in this report)
2. The new terms of reference for the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and each of the panels are approved and incorporated into the constitution.
3. Statutory health scrutiny functions (other than referral of matters to the Secretary of State for Health) are delegated to the Caring Plymouth panel.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To continue under the current system, which was rejected as overview and scrutiny is not as effective as it could be and the Council needs to continue to modernise its processes and ensure that Overview and Scrutiny focusses on the issues most important to the Council’s improvement.

Published work / information:

Existing terms of reference for scrutiny
http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/council_constitution.pdf

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Sign off:

Fin		Leg		Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member – Giles Perritt													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes / No													

1.0 Introduction and proposed structure

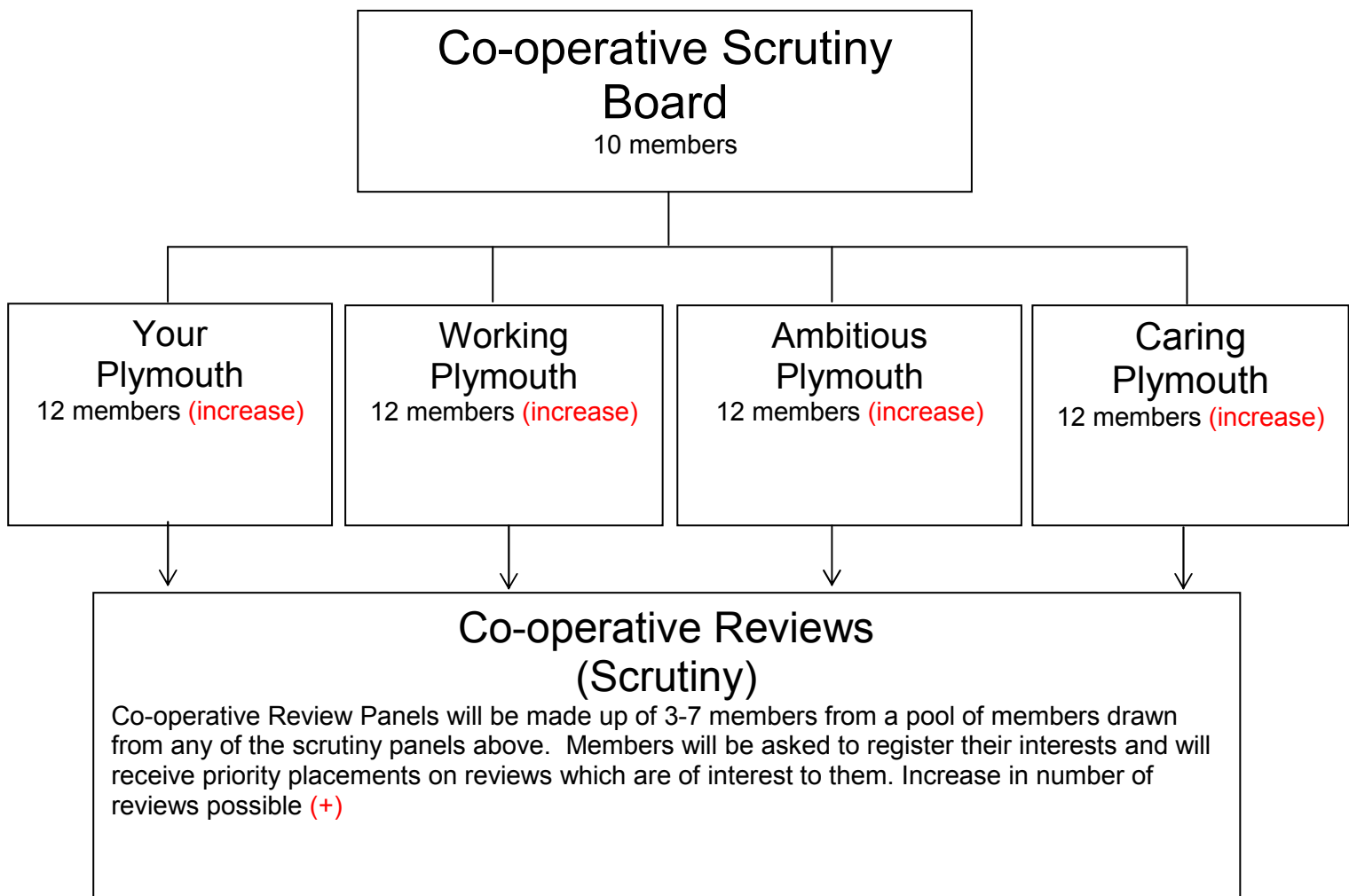
The proposed structure is for a Co-operative Scrutiny Board (the Board) and four Scrutiny Panels. The Board consists five Chairs and four Vice Chairs and one non chair member. Each of the four panels consist of 12 members including a chair and vice chair. The panels proposed are:

- Your Plymouth
- Caring Plymouth (with the Joint Health Panel, as required)
- Working Plymouth
- Ambitious Plymouth

The four panels will be chaired by a member from the majority political group with the vice chair from the opposition political group. One of the opposition vice chairs will take the role of Chair of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board.

The Co-operative Scrutiny Board may set up Co-operative Reviews Groups. The purpose of these groups will be to undertake scrutiny work as required by the Board and will be time and remit specific. These groups will be made up of members who have expressed an interest in the particular issue.

In keeping with implied good practice there will be no “whipping” of the members of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board or its panels.



1.1 Co-operative Scrutiny Board

The break-down of the Board membership is all of the chairs and vice chairs of the four panels and two additional non-chair members. The Chair of the Board will be one of the vice chairs of the panels. Any Council Member who is not a Cabinet Member and who sits on a scrutiny panel may substitute at Board Meetings. The Board will meet at least one a month (except May, August and December) with provisional meetings on a 2-weekly basis to allow for call-ins.

The Co-operative Scrutiny Boards responsibilities are:

- To hear call-ins, councillor call for action and petitions and to allocate work accordingly
- To oversee workloads, including approval of work programmes, allocate work and the approval of co-operative scrutiny review requests
- To manage relationships between panels, cabinet members and partners to produce effective scrutiny
- To monitor performance against the relevant corporate priorities
- To receive finance and performance reports and to carry out the Annual Budget Scrutiny
- To agree recommendations to Cabinet, Council and partner organisations
- To produce an annual scrutiny report
- To agree appointments of co-opted representatives to panels
- Responsible for publicity and communications
- To monitor the forward plan
- To scrutinise corporate and cross cutting business

1.2 The Panels

Each of the panels has its own terms of reference (attached as appendix 2). The Caring Plymouth panel will also have special responsibility for statutory functions in relation to health matters and joint health obligations.

Business meetings will take place four times per year except for Caring Plymouth who will have eight meetings per year to allow time to deal with statutory obligations. All meetings will be pre-planned into the annual calendar of council meetings. Panels will be on a set day and time determined by the individual panels (although panels must not be moved to clash with another scrutiny meeting). Any member who is not a Cabinet member and who is in the 'pool' of scrutiny members can substitute at panel business meetings.

1.3 Co-opted Representatives

The statutory co-opted representatives will be allocated to the relevant panel.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Chairs, Vice Chairs and Officers

The role and responsibilities of Chairs, Vice Chairs and Officers will be set out in the Scrutiny handbook.

1.5 Co-operative Scrutiny Reviews

Co-operative Reviews must be approved by the Co-operative Scrutiny Board. Reviews can be submitted (using the appropriate form) by any member direct to the Board. Panels may also submit requests for reviews.

All requests will be considered by the Board using an approval criteria and cannot commence until they have received approval. Once a co-operative scrutiny review has commenced work, no substitution is allowed.

Membership will be drawn from the entire pool of scrutiny members and will be made up of members who have expressed an interest in the subject matter. Where there are not sufficient members who have expressed an interest in the subject matter the Chair of the Board will consult the group whips for additional members.

Reviews must be chaired by a member of the Co-operative Scrutiny Board.

Every member of a scrutiny panel should aim to take part in at least one scrutiny review.

Review meetings should take place in a relevant venue where possible and practicable. Times, venue and frequency of meetings will be at the discretion of the review group members and should happen in a timely manner and with consideration given to ensuring that the relevant members and officers can input into the review.

Consideration should be given to co-opting of members of the public and organisations who may have experience / expertise in the relevant area and can add value to the process.

A report of the co-operative scrutiny review, including recommendation must be submitted to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board.

1.6 Communications

A summary of scrutiny activity will be provided to the cabinet on a monthly basis.

A monthly circular will be sent to all scrutiny members providing useful information, details of activity at the Board and information on upcoming co-operative review groups.