

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 JANUARY 2016**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

11

TITLE OF REPORT: PROTOCOL FOR TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises changes to the conduct of its task and finish groups which the Committee has discussed and/or agreed over previous meetings.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- suggest any elements they would like to see in a revised protocol on task and finish groups;
 - consider and agree the new principles and approach to handling task and finish groups. These are set out in section 7 of the report and will be discussed further at the meeting; and
 - agree to amend the existing protocol to incorporate these new principles.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable the Committee to conduct its task and finish groups effectively.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 None.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED CHANGES

- 7.1 The Committee agreed a protocol for task and finish groups in 2012 which clarified the roles of members and officers at different stages in the task and finish group process. This is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 7.2 This year the Committee has considered taking a more flexible and member led approach to running task and finish groups so the existing protocol will need to be updated to reflect any changes. The changes which have been discussed include:
- a more flexible approach to chairing task and finish groups;
 - the Chair of the task and finish group finalising the scope;
 - the process being led by members rather than by a lead officer;
 - always hearing outside evidence where appropriate;
 - more comprehensive pre-briefing of task and finish group members beforehand so they are better informed and meetings are more productive; and
 - task and finish group reports' progression to Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- 7.3 The Chairman will invite a discussion about the principles of proposed changes in the way that the Committee and task and finish groups work in more detail at the meeting. As a result of discussions at the start of the Civic Year about the operation of the Committee, the way that the business of the meetings has been conducted has developed over the year and this is very positive in terms of direction of travel.
- 7.4 Depending on the outcome of the discussion, the protocol will be re-drafted for the Committee's consideration at its meeting in March.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1 October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5 April 2011. There is a general duty, described below, that public bodies must meet, and this is underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.
- 11.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions: give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

11.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

12. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no social value implications arising from this report.

13. APPENDICES

13.1 Appendix A – Existing Protocol for Task and Finish Groups

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15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 None.