

Action Plan in response to recommendations from Peer Support to O&S and FAR Committees 2023

| | Recommendation | Response | Ownership | Target Date (where applicable) | Status |
|---|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|--------|
| | Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | | | |
| 1 | Define what you want your scrutiny panels to achieve. | <p>To be discussed with the scrutiny committee, but approach based on the 4 principles of good scrutiny would make sense:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides critical friend challenge to policymakers and decision makers • enables the voice and concerns of the public • is carried out by independent-minded people who lead and own the scrutiny role • drives improvement in public services | Scrutiny Committee | | |
| 2 | Put into place scrutiny training for the whole council (members and officers) and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Ensure all members understand the benefits and role of scrutiny. | <p>Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.</p> <p>Group leaders need to reinforce the importance of attending training with their groups</p> | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning Development + | | |
| 3 | Consider how the provision of all committee development & training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g., use of one-to-one coaching, the provision of feedback from live meetings, further training to fill any gaps in knowledge and skills. | Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning Development + | | |
| 4 | Urgently fund and recruit a dedicated scrutiny officer. | Budget has been identified for a part time scrutiny officer, subject to successful recruitment | Democratic Services Manager/ Committee, | | |

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| | | | Member & Scrutiny Manager | | |
| 5 | Members to actively review the forward plan and invitation of cabinet members to attend O&S. This could be overcome with a dedicated scrutiny officer in place. | This is already on every agenda and is done at every meeting. It will be for Members to take forward with the Scrutiny Officer. | Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny officer | | |
| 6 | Proper and effective reporting onwards to council and cabinet by O&S is required. | Chair and scrutiny officer will need to take this forward and consider the best way to report O+S discussion to Cabinet and Council. This can be done verbally. A report from a Task & Finish Group would be a written report. | Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny officer | | |
| 7 | Establish clear meeting protocols and associated processes for questioning cabinet members. | For scrutiny officer to work through with the Chair. | Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny officer | | |
| 8 | Officers to always facilitate the bringing forward of future agenda items requested by O&S in a timely manner. | This is accepted but felt to have been a one-off example. It would be for the scrutiny officer to ensure this happens. | Scrutiny officer | | |
| 9 | Training in scrutiny questioning skills (KLOE). | Has been and will continue to be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning Development + | | |
| 10 | Specific O&S training for the opposition too to encourage effective opposition role. There is specific scrutiny training for groups in opposition to assist with scrutiny work and assists them in being more effective throughout the council. | Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning Development + | | |
| 11 | Scrutiny needs to actively seek to implement the use of task & finish groups. | This is for the Chair and Committee to consider, with the | Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee | | |

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| | | support of the Scrutiny Officer. | Scrutiny officer | | |
| 12 | It was observed by some members that the preparation for the special scrutiny meeting on the 'call to account' was beneficial and lessons learnt on how this preparation helped scrutiny should be considered in taking forward scrutiny in the future. | For scrutiny officer to work through with the Chair. | Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny officer | | |
| 13 | Establish proactive annual programme of work and agenda setting. | This is for the Chair and Committee to consider, with the support of the Scrutiny Officer. | Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny officer | | |
| 14 | Provide O&S training in chairing skills. | Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development | | |
| 15 | Training in scrutiny questioning skills (KLOE). | Duplicate. See entry 9 above | | | |
| 16 | Ensure the scrutiny committee actively follow up on all recommendations. | This is already on every agenda. For scrutiny officer to work with the Chair and committee to ensure it is actively look at it. | Chair of Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny officer | | |
| 17 | Consideration should be given by the cabinet and portfolio holders on how they can carry out their role in a way that supports scrutiny being able to act as effectively as possible. | This links to the vision for scrutiny in recommendation one. It should be a two-way critical friend relationship. To be included as part of training and potentially part of work planning. Cabinet to consider how to better engage with scrutiny. | Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Chair of Scrutiny | | |
| 18 | Ensure minutes reflect the decisions of the meeting – e.g., requests for agenda items | Committee services and the scrutiny officer will make sure | Committee Services | | |

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| | to be recorded in the minutes and added to the forward plan. | everything is accurately captured. | Scrutiny officer | | |
| 19 | Cabinet members should consistently and without exception be expected to attend O&S committee meetings where decisions from their area of responsibilities are being scrutinised. | Agreed. This is the current approach unless there is an emergency. Cabinet to consider as part of how to better engage with scrutiny. | Cabinet | | |
| 20 | The scrutiny chair or their representative should attend all cabinet meetings to present scrutiny findings, particularly to enable the thinking and debate around the recommendations to be clearly communicated with the cabinet to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on decisions. | Agreed. | Chair of Scrutiny | | |
| 21 | Where cabinet do not accept an O&S recommendation, reasons should be given. | Agreed. Cabinet to consider as part of how to better engage with scrutiny. | Cabinet | | |
| Finance Audit and Risk Committee | | Response | | | |
| 22 | Put into place training for the whole council and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Including an introduction to local government finance. | Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning Development | + | |
| 23 | Consider how the provision of all committee development & training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g. use of one-to-one coaching, the provision of feedback from live meetings, further training to fill any gaps in knowledge and skills. | Will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed. Message to go out that it is ok to ask IC for help with development applicable to all cttees, not just FAR. | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning Development | + | |

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| 24 | Split finance scrutiny from audit and risk. The scrutiny of finance should sit with a scrutiny committee rather than in the audit and risk committee. | <p>The reasons behind the recommendation are understood, but considered premature.</p> <p>Given the various recommendations that need to be implemented in respect of Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is perhaps not the best time to be giving the committee additional work.</p> <p>Equally the introduction of an independent member and the various recommendations that need to be implemented in respect of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, should improve, and enhance that Committee.</p> <p>This recommendation will therefore be revisited in 18 months as part of a wider review of structures post 2024 election.</p> | Leader Deputy Leader Managing Director SD Legal and Community SD Resources | | |
| 25 | After the audit and risk function had been split from the finance (scrutiny) role, the new audit committee should focus on understanding their audit role and undertake a self-assessment of the role of an effective audit committee. | To be considered as part of the wider review of structures post 2024 election. | As above | | |
| 26 | Enhance the status of a new audit & risk committee. | Though there will not be an additional Audit and Risk Committee at this time, we do | Group Leaders SD Resources | | |

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| | | <p>need to enhance the status of the current committee. Group Leaders asked to explain importance of the role to the appointments they make to FAR.</p> <p>SD Resources to draft a form of words for the Chair to read out at the first meeting of FAR in the new civic year to explain its purpose and importance.</p> <p>Description of the committee on the website to be reviewed as currently under sells the committee.</p> | | | |
| 27 | Consider an easier way for members to view the risk register. | The risk register is accessible with a user name and password, however will consider different access options and re-promote to make clear it is available to all Members, not just those on the committee. | SD Resources | | |
| 28 | Support members with better understanding of the council's risks. | <p>Agreed. Training on risk will take place after the May 2023 election and in advance of the first committee meetings, particularly where the issues are cross cutting.</p> <p>Thereafter will be incorporated within the member training programme being developed.</p> | Democratic Services Member Champions Learning Development SD Resources | + | |
| 29 | Minutes to reflect the decisions of the meeting – i.e., requests for agenda items | Committee services will make sure everything is accurately captured. | Committee Services | | |

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| | to be in the minutes and added to the forward plan. | | | | |
| 30 | Conduct a skills audit of all members at induction training to support groups in making appropriate appointments to committees. | <p>Agreed. For Group leaders to take forward with their groups.</p> <p>Will also be used to inform the member training programme being developed.</p> | Group leaders | | |
| 31 | Ensure that every member of the community can easily access information about council meetings. | <p>Agreed, albeit there are currently a number of ways to access information and it is not solely digitally/online.</p> <p>Reminder to be placed in Outlook about how to access information.</p> <p>Committee services to consider the issue more broadly to ensure we are not accidentally disenfranchising parts of the community.</p> | Committee Services | | |