

Agenda Item 7.

TITLE	Changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Structure
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 June 2015
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Democratic Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

An efficient Overview and Scrutiny structure.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to Council that the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee be disbanded and its functions transferred to the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report sets out the decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to recommend to Council that the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee be disbanded and its functions transferred to the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Background

The present Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure of an overarching Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and four Overview and Scrutiny Committees, (Children's Services, Community Partnerships, Corporate Services and Health) was agreed by the Council in May 2013 following a review by the Scrutiny Structures Working Group.

The Management Committee is able under its Terms of Reference to propose amendments to the composition and Terms of Reference of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the Council on the basis of political proportionality, (Para 6.1.4(a) of the Council's Constitution).

Chapter 1.1.4 of the Council's Constitution also states that the Monitoring Officer will monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that its aims and principles are given full effect.

Analysis of Issues

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure agreed in May 2013 reflected the anticipated need at the time for a Management Committee and four sub-committees based upon expected work load and the objective of creating scrutiny committees which had different areas of focus. Whilst the terms of reference of all the Committees were drafted flexibly, the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was intended to have an internal Council focus whereas the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee was intended to have a more external focus and include within its remit the exercise of the Council's crime and disorder responsibilities and flood risk management responsibilities, (Para 6.2.3.1 of the Council's Constitution).

Given that the current structure has been in place for two years it was timely to reconsider whether it is necessary to continue with the current number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees based upon the past workload of the Committees and the need to use Officer and Member resources in the most effective way possible. In light of the relatively light workload of the Corporate Services and Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the last municipal year, and the anticipated future workload in 2015/2016 of the Management Committee, it was recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee that the number of committees could be reduced by the deletion of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the transfer of its functions and responsibilities to the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At its meeting on 1 June 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered a paper on the issue and agreed to recommend to Council that the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee be disbanded. Whilst recognising the important contribution made by the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee to overview and scrutiny within the Borough it was not felt that the disbanding of the committee would detract from the operation of Overview and Scrutiny overall.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£1,600 (Save)	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£2,500 (Save)	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£2,500 (Save)	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The Chairman of the Community Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives a Special Responsibility Allowance therefore the saving above relates to a reduction in Members' Allowance. There will also be a small administrative saving e.g. agenda printing costs which has not yet been quantified.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

None

List of Background Papers

Council's Constitution Section 6

Contact Kevin Jacob	Service Governance and Improvement Services
Telephone No 0118 974 6058	Email kevin.jacob@wokingham.gov.uk
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