

GOVERNANCE REVIEW BOARD

Monday 7 November 2022

Present:-

Councillor Rob Hannaford (Chair)
Councillors Jobson, Mitchell, M, Warwick and Wright

Also Present:-
Councillor D.Moore

Also Present

Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support and Democratic Services Team Leader

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APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Director Corporate Services.

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MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2022, were confirmed as a correct record.

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FORMATION OF A SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

The Chair introduced the request to form a Scrutiny Sub Committee, which had been raised by a Member at the Strategic Scrutiny Committee in June 2022. There had been a lot of work undertaken with various partners to achieve the Council Net Zero 2030 goal and the formation of a sub-committee of Scrutiny was considered to be more relevant than a Task and Finish group and would also prevent overwhelming the other work of Strategic Scrutiny Committee. It had been agreed to be present the proposal to the Governance Review Board for consideration.

Councillor D. Moore was in attendance and highlighted that the Council had declared a climate emergency and ecological crisis and that the proposal to form a sub-committee would enable Members the means to review and monitor this work and provide regular updates to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee. Particular points raised on the matter included:-

- The sub-committee would enable Members to engage with the Portfolio Holder to progress work on Net Zero;
- Section 9FA of the Local Government Act 2000, provided provision to form a sub-committee and allowed outside persons to also be invited;
- The sub-committee would allow updates on the progress of the carbon budget monitoring; and
- If set up, it would be semi regular meetings, to support resourcing and act as a sounding board to help balance the Councils Net Zero target.

Councillor Jobson, commented that the Strategic Scrutiny Committee should maintain its oversight of the work and considered that it might not be a time saving exercise for additional meetings and reports coming back to Strategic Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Warwick expressed scepticism of sub committees and the potential for repetition of work, but also saw the merit in what was being proposed.

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, highlighted that legislation enabled Scrutiny Committees to establish a sub-committee. At its first meeting, the sub-committee would need to establish its terms of reference and align the work with the rest of the Council and highlighted the following points:-

- Should a biannual update on climate emergency work be taken at Strategic Scrutiny Committee, as part of its remit;
- The sub-committee would need to be politically balanced and group Leaders would need to nominate membership for approval by Full Council; and
- Although Net Zero was a key priority for the Council, there was limited resources available which would impact on both the Democratic Services and the Net Zero teams.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- Strategic Scrutiny Committee already addressed work on Net Zero, and a sub-committee would create an additional layer of work;
- A lot of work on Net Zero was being undertaken from various organisations, and it was important to gain some management of who was doing the work, particularly with resource and budget restraints and whether it was practical at this time;
- Scrutiny was under resourced which impacted on the work. A single meeting agenda item wouldn't be enough to cover the work required to address Net Zero issues and public engagement was also needed; and
- All Members of Strategic Scrutiny Committee needed to be involved, even if it meant having extra meetings in the calendar.

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support highlighted, that if Members were in agreement to form a sub-committee then a recommendation would need to be agreed at full Council to adopt a Strategic Scrutiny Sub-Committee. Resources would need to be identified from various teams and other non-statutory meetings would also need reviewing to ensure there were adequate resources in place.

The Terms of Reference would be defined at the first convened meeting and the Sub-Committee would need to be reviewed annually, to ensure the work undertaken was effective.

The Chair proposed to adopt a Strategic Scrutiny Sub-Committee and was seconded by Councillor M. Mitchell. The membership would be politically balanced and consist of 5 Members as follows: 3 Labour Group Members, 1 Conservative Group Member and 1 Progressive Group Member. The relevant Portfolio Holder would also be invited to attend and the Chair would be agreed at its first meeting.

Members agreed by a majority vote, to adopt a Strategic Scrutiny Sub-Committee and establish the Terms of Reference at its first meeting, following approval by full Council.

SUBMISSIONS FROM PROGRESSIVE GROUP

The Governance Review referred to the submissions from the Progressive Group, as attached with the agenda and the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support responded each point raised as follows:-