Meeting Date:	22 February 2019
Portfolio:	Cross-cutting
Key Decision:	No
Within Policy and	
Budget Framework	
Private/Public	Public

Title:	BUSINESS & TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL TASK & FINISH GROUP REPORT - AN EFFICIENCY AND EFFICACY REVIEW OF THE CURRENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF THE COUNCIL

Report of:	Policy & Communications Manager
Report Number:	O&S 06/19

Purpose / Summary:

This report presents the report from the Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel Task & Finish Group work on an efficiency and efficacy review of the current governance structures of the Council.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Consider the consultation responses from the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

- Adopt the Task & Finish Report, noting the amendments

- Reach a resolution, that could be taken forward as a recommendation to Council, on the following:

    o The number of Panels for the Civic Year 2019/20
    o The number of members on the panel(s)
    o The frequency of panel(s) meetings
    o Whether to proceed and put these recommendations to Council in April or not to proceed and leave these recommendations for consideration after May
    o Consult with Executive on these resolutions in March

Tracking

Executive:	**11/03/2019**
Scrutiny:	**22/02/2019 Special**
Council:	**To be confirmed**

1.   Background

1.1   The Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel resolved at their meeting on 18 October that a Task & Finish Group be established to scrutinise the governance arrangements for the Council. The Task and Finish Group would include the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Ellis, Councillor Alcroft and Councillor Allison. Relevant Members and Officers would also be invited to take part in the Task Group work. Councillor Alcroft was, subsequently, replaced by Councillor McDonald.

1.2   The group met twice to scope the review and then agree the methodology. At the most recent meeting, 13 December 2018, the group discussed a draft report. Group Leaders were invited to attend and share their views at the meeting.

1.3   The group agreed that the draft report, once amended, could be presented to the Panel on 3 January 2019.

1.4   The Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel discussed the report on 3 January and reached the following resolutions:

RESOLVED – 1) That the report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on the efficiency and efficacy review of the current governance structures of the Council be agreed for consultation purposes (OS.33/18).

2) That the Task and Finish Group continue to work to gather evidence to be submitted to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel at its special meeting on 22 February 2019 along with feedback from the consultation with the Groups and the other Scrutiny Panels.

1.5   Consultation with the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and the Health & Wellbeing Panel has been completed and the minutes are included on this agenda.

1.6   The discussion at the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel prompted a paper to the Scrutiny Chairs Group (24 January) looking at how the national review could inform the measurement of 'effectiveness'. The paper is presented in Appendix B, the Scrutiny Chairs Group were happy with the questions and agreed that it was a useful exercise.

1.7   The Task & Finish Group met on 14 February to consider amendments to the Task & Finish Group report.

2.   Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Consider the consultation responses from the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

- Adopt the Task & Finish Report, noting the amendments

- Reach a resolution, that could be taken forward as a recommendation to Council, on the following:

    o The number of Panels for the Civic Year 2019/20
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Appendices attached   Task & Finish Group Report: An efficiency and efficacy review of
to report: the current governance structures of the Council

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:
LEGAL –
FINANCE – None
EQUALITY – None
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – None

Appendix A: Task and Finish Group Report version 1.1

#To follow

Appendix B: EGSP 17/1/19, How effective is the current scrutiny arrangements?

The discussion at the EGSP meeting touched on developing the national guidance as an assessment tool, based upon the report contents. A set of statements have been created using the report and Panel members, Executive, SMT and officers attending panels could all be invited to complete a short survey based on these statements.

The following scale is offered as a response option for each statement:

Strongly agree/Agree/Neither agree nor disagree/disagree/strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the scrutiny function?

Organisational Culture

1. Scrutiny is accountable to Council.
2. Scrutiny is equally as important as Executive.
3. The role of scrutiny chair is respected and viewed by all as being a key part of the decision-making process, rather than as a form of political patronage.
4. The role of scrutiny chair is independent of political party or partisan motivations.
5. Senior councillors from both the administration and the opposition set the tone and create an environment that welcomes constructive challenge and democratic accountability.
6. Senior council officers set the tone and create an environment that welcomes constructive challenge and democratic accountability.

Accessing Information

7. Scrutiny has access to the information required to do its work.

Resources

8. There are sufficient resources in place to support scrutiny.
9. Scrutiny is involved when contracts are still being developed, so that all parties understand that the service will still have democratic oversight despite being delivered by a commercial entity.

Member training and skills

10. Scrutiny members have all the skills or knowledge that they need to deliver effective scrutiny.
11. Scrutiny members have enough prior subject knowledge to prevent meetings becoming information exchanges at the expense of thorough scrutiny.

12. Listening and questioning skills are exercised to make scrutiny impactful.
13. Scrutiny has the capacity to constructively critique the executive rather than following party lines.

The role of the public

14. The council leadership allocates sufficient resources to enable a role for the public in scrutiny.
15. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in local scrutiny.

Scrutinising public services provided by external bodies

16. Panels can access information and require attendance at meetings from service providers, commercial interests are not a barrier.
17. Panels can 'follow the council pound' and have the power to oversee all taxpayer-funded services.
18. Scrutiny panels can require LEPs to provide information and attend panel meetings as required.