Report details

Meeting Date:	06/01/2022
Portfolio:	Cross cutting
Key Decision:	
Policy and Budget Framework	
Public / Private	Public

Title:	Future Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Report
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number:	O&S 01/22

Purpose / Summary:

This report summarises the work of the Future Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and sets out its findings for BTSP to consider and make recommendations on.

Recommendations:

BTSP are asked to recommend that the Monitoring Officer makes changes to the Carlisle City Council Constitution that will allow scrutiny to move to a two Scrutiny Panel arrangements, as outlined in the proposals of this report.

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	BTSP 06/01/2022
Council:	

1. Background

1.1. In 2018 BTSP established a Task and Finish Group to consider changed to scrutiny arrangements at Carlisle City Council as part of a review into efficiencies of the Council's Governance Structures. This Task and Finish group was very thorough and produced a considerable body of evidence that was presented to BTSP at a special meeting on 22 February 2019. The report recommended a move to two Scrutiny Panels, however, following discussion and a vote by the Panel it this recommendation was not taken forward by BTSP. The decision not to take forward recommendations appears to have turned on the timing of the report and lack of consensus. The full 2018/19 Task and Finish Group report is included in Appendix 3 and has provided a considerable foundation for the proposals in this report.

1.2. In January 2020 the Council invited an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge to consider its performance. Following useful findings of this in relation to governance and decision making, an LGA Peer Support review was requested. This took place in November 2020 and focussed on governance models, scrutiny and decision making. This second report made several recommendations that were specific to scrutiny:

- Provide Chairs of Scrutiny with further dedicated support
- Officers working with Scrutiny and Chairs of Scrutiny are encouraged to speak to colleagues elsewhere to share learning
- Support and training for members of scrutiny
- Identifying a clear senior scrutiny champion
- Consider the structure of scrutiny and look again at options for reducing the number of committees.
- Have a scrutiny improvement plan in place

Both of these LGA Peer Reviews pre-date the decision around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cumbria and do not reflect its impacts on Council priorities or resources. However, some improvements that were identified had already been made and will benefit Members and officers in the coming months, such as an improvement plan and senior officer support for scrutiny. Other comments, such as those around strategic scrutiny agendas, are an area for continued improvement that will offer good use of resources during the period until Vesting Day.

Detail on the findings of these reports on scrutiny are given in Appendix 2.

1.3. Scrutiny Improvement Work

The 2018/19 Task and Finish Group noted that more training should be offered to Scrutiny Members. The Peer Challenge and LGA Peer Support (Jan and Nov 2020) also noted a number of actions that could improve scrutiny work at the City Council. LGA Peer Support (Nov 2020) noted that some improvement work had been undertaken since the Peer Challenge (Jan 2020).

Recent improvement activity includes:
- Training for scrutiny members offered at the start of each council year
- Meeting times are now varied between 10am and 4pm starts to encourage engagement by a wider range of Members in scrutiny.
- Chairs have an increased focus on robust work planning and have renewed support from Senior Management Team to do this.
- Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan developed in response to LGA Peer Support (Nov 2020) and progress monitored at Scrutiny Chairs meetings by Chairs and the senior officer Scrutiny Champion (Darren Crossley).
- Increased sharing of briefing notes and training materials during the year for Scrutiny Members.

1.4. BTSP resolved to establish a Task and Finish group, that included Members of other Panels at their meeting of 15 July 2021 to consider scrutiny structures, in response to the LGA Peer Review (Nov 2020). HWSP and EGSP both considered this invitation and nominated Members to join this Task and Finish Group, which took place during November and December 2021.
This report sets out the recommendations of this Task and Finish Group for BTSP to consider and make recommendations on.

1.5. The recommendations that BTSP are being asked to consider in this report differ from the recommendations that they were asked to consider in February 2019 as they include additional evidence, from two Peer reports. Also, this report's recommendations focus on a specific two-panel structure that is set out in detail in the "Proposals" section.

1.6. If BTSP chose to take forward the recommendations of the Task and Finish group, the pathway and timescales for delivering these recommendations are set out below.

Action	Progress/ timescale
O&S Chairs meet and agree a lead panel so as to avoid all three panels receiving reports on the same issue	Done BTSP to lead – June 2021
Panel BTSP meets and resolves to set up a task and finish group which will include members from all three O&S Panels.	15 July 21
Task and Finish Group gathers evidence and drafts a report	November/ December 2021
Task and Finish Group gathers evidence and presents a report to BTSP	T&F group report to BTSP 06 Jan 2022
BTSP, if it wishes to endorse T&F group proposals, makes a recommendation to the Monitoring Officer	06 Jan 2022
Monitoring Officer drafts changes to the Constitution and refers to Leader for comments	Jan 2022
Monitoring Officer presents draft changes to the Constitution to full Council for a decision	1 March 2022
If Council agrees changes to Constitution, civic calendar is changed and goes to full Council for agreement	26 April 2022
First post elections full Council meeting, council nominated Members and Chairs to Place and People Panels.	May 2022

2. Proposals

2.1 The Future Scrutiny Task and Finish group are proposing a two-panel structure, with a "Place Panel" and a "People Panel". This structure includes an ad-hoc "Resources Panel" that is serviced by Members of the Place and People Panels and considers budget matters.

2.2 Place Panel

Membership: 8 Members
Meets: 8 times per year
Chairing: Chair and Vice Chair elected at Annual Council

This Panel considers matters that contribute to the physical environment of Carlisle. They also consider how the physical environment is communicated and perceived in order to draw in more physical and economic benefits to the city (the "place offer").

Examples of key work steams that will fall within the remit of Place Panel include:
- Infrastructure (Capital projects, regeneration, pathways, lighting)
- Council assets (fleet, buildings, CCTV)
- Environment (Environment Strategy, environmental improvements, regulatory activity, environmental health, enforcement, conservation)
- Amenities (green spaces, leisure centres, parks, Tullie House)
- Housing (development, improvements, empty homes, housing needs, social housing)
- Economic development/ regeneration (Borderlands, Towns Deal, High Street)
- Planning
- Local identity (marketing, tourism, events, heritage)
- Physical and digital connectivity

2.3 People Panel

Membership: 8 Members
Meets: 8 times per year
Chairing: Chair and Vice Chair elected at Annual Council

This Panel considers matters impact upon local people, communities and the Council's workforce. It considers matters that impact upon social relationships, quality of life and health.

Examples of key work steams that will fall within the remit of Place Panel include:
- Partnerships (professional, community groups, funding bids)
- Workforce (HR, payroll, workforce development, equalities)
- Customers (service provision/ performance, consultation, data, FOI)
- Culture/ arts (Cultural Strategy, arts development)
- Community support/ organisations (community centres, volunteering)
- Health and wellbeing (GLL contract, sports development)
- Emergency planning

- Communications (PR, media)
- Homelessness

2.4 Resources Panel

Membership – 4 Members of Place Panel (including 1 Chair or vice Chair), 4 Members of People Panel (including 1 Chair or vice Chair)

Meets: 3 times per year. Meetings in November and January for budget process. Meet in July for MTFP, Asset Management Plan and Capital Investment Strategy.

Chairing: Chair and Vice Chair elected from panel members at first meeting of the year.

This Panel focuses on budget and key finance strategies.
- Budget
- Capital Strategy
- MTFP

The Finance comments in the "Corporate Implications" section later on in this report contain comments that are specifically relevant to the establishment of a Resources Panel.

2.5 Advantages of these proposals:
- Reduced duplication in the Panels work, compared to the current structures. For example, BTSP and HWSP currently consider different aspects of the Sands Centre project. This is demonstrated in the example workplans that are outlined in Appendix 1.
- Place and People reflect the two workstreams themes that have been identified to structure work for LGR.
- Reduces the number of Members that are required to be involved in scrutiny to 16. This reduction is aligned to recommendations in Peer Challenges and reflects the fewer number of Members, compared to when the current three-Panel structure was established. The current structure offers 24 Member places, but five Members are on more than one Panel, so the City Council currently has 19 Scrutiny Members.
- If LGR progresses as currently planned, the budget setting role of Resources Panel may not be required in 2022/23.

2.6 In recent years a number of local authorities have responded to austerity by reorganising their directorates into two: People and Place. A number of councils

also seem to be using a people/ place approach to their scrutiny panels (examples include East Sussex, Southend, Dorset, Redbridge). Some councils also seem to be keeping budget work out of these Panels, either using a less frequently meeting Resources Panel or giving budget work to Audit Committee.

2.7 Limitations of these proposals:

- These proposals will make changes to the way that scrutiny operates at Carlisle City Council. Under the current LGR timescales, Carlisle City Council will operate until April 2023, we will undertake scrutiny activity up until Vesting Day. Carlisle City council scrutiny activity will focus on work of the City Council, which will need to provide a service to residents up to Vesting Day.

- There will be elections to the Cumberland Shadow Council in May 2022. A Shadow Executive will form and it is anticipated that Shadow Scrutiny arrangements will be put in place. The Shadow Council and then Cumberland Council will make their own decisions about governance and scrutiny arrangements.

3 Risks

3.1 There is a risk that BTSP may recommend changes to the Constitution in order to change City Council scrutiny arrangements that are not supported at Full Council. There has been lack of consensus among Members on this matter in the past; however impacts of this risk are minimal.

4 Consultation

4.1 The BTSP resolution to form this Task and Finish Group and seek engagement from other Panels was discussed by both HWSP and EGSP at their meetings of 14 October 2021 and 21 October 2021 respectively. Both Panels nominated Members to participate in this Task and Finish Group.

4.2 Scrutiny Chairs Group considered the findings of the LGA Peer Support (Nov 2020) at their meeting in April 2021 and scoping work around what a two-panel structure could look like for Carlisle. This scoping work has formed the basis for the proposed People-Place arrangement that is set out in this report. Scrutiny Chairs also invited group leaders, Cllr Mallinson and Cllr Tickner, to their June 2021 meeting to discuss next steps on future scrutiny arrangements and the People-Place draft structure.

5 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 BTSP are asked to recommend that the Monitoring Officer makes changes to the Carlisle City Council Constitution that will allow scrutiny to move to a two Scrutiny Panel arrangements, as outlined in the proposals of this report.

6   Contribution to the Carlisle Plan Priorities

6.1 Overview and scrutiny of items that are prioritised within the Carlisle Plan contributes to ongoing policy development and service improvement. Improving scrutiny arrangements has the potential to improve the delivery of Carlisle plan priorities.

Contact details:

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Appendices attached to report:
- Appendix 1: Detail on draft Place-People Workplans
- Appendix 2: Key Points from Corporate Peer Challenge (Jan 2020) and LGA Peer Support (Nov 2020)
- Appendix 3: Report of 2018/19 Task and Finish Group

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

Corporate Implications:

Legal – There has not been any legal/governance input into the task and finish group's report but commenting on the proposal:

i.   The TFG proposals may be conveniently achieved by renaming the three existing panels, refining their remits and reducing the number of meetings of BTSP/"Resources".

ii.   The Group Leaders may be invited to appoint Resource members that are on the People and Place panels but it is a matter for them whether they do so or not. Council currently appoints the Chair/Vice Chair of each panel so that will require a constitutional amendment if that is what is desired.

iii.   Members should consider whether it is appropriate to make these changes at this time given the impending Local Government Reorganisation and the need for scrutiny (likely BTSP or "Resources") to be involved in that from early next year, onwards. The current proposals remove convenient meetings for this purpose from the calendar.

Property Services –

Finance - The report, at paragraph 2.4, sets out the remit and regulatory of the proposed Resources Panel; however, if LGR is implemented in Cumbria based upon the current timeline, then the City Council will not be setting a budget for 2023/24 and therefore will not have any budget proposals, nor MTFP, AMP and Capital Investment Plans, to scrutinise during 2022/23. The Scrutiny panels have, in effect, scrutinised the last budget for Carlisle City Council at their meetings in November and December 2021.

However, if there is any delay in the process, the Resources panel can meet at the times stipulated in the report to address the Budget Strategy documents (July) and scrutiny of the detailed budget proposals (November – January) in line with the governance arrangements already in place.

The report does not refer to which panel will take responsibility for the scrutiny of the quarterly budgetary position for Revenue and Capital, which will still be a key requirement during 2022/23. This work will be fundamental to ensure the financial sustainability of the new Cumberland Council post April 2023.

The distinction between the scrutiny provided by the existing panels and the role of the Audit Committee (assurance) must be recognised and clearly understood by Members with due consideration given before any financial management issues are transferred between committees.

Equality – None

Information Governance - None

Appendix 1: Detail on draft Place-People Workplans

People Panel – Example workplan based upon 2021-22 workplans for current Panels

Meeting month	Item	Type of Scrutiny	Current panel
June	End of Year Performance Report	Monitoring	HWSP
	Financial Update on the Impact of Covid-19	Monitoring	BTSP
	Outturn Reports	Monitoring	BTSP
	Sickness Absence - end of year report 2020/21	Monitoring	BTSP
July	Draft Carlisle Plan	Policy Devel'pt	HWSP
	Sustainable Food Places - Food Carlisle	Policy update	HWSP
	Update on IT projects	Monitoring	BTSP
	Business Rates Outturn 2020/21	Monitoring	BTSP
	Draft Carlisle Plan	Policy Devel'pt	BTSP
Sept	Sands Centre Project Monitoring Report	Monitoring	BTSP
	Sickness Absence Q1	Monitoring	BTSP
	External Audit Report - Action Plan and recommendations	Monitoring	BTSP
	Annual Equality Report	Policy update	HWSP
	Performance Report - Q1	Monitoring	HWSP
	Covid-19 Recovery Update	Policy update	HWSP
	Sands Centre Redevelopment - planning programmes	Policy update	HWSP
	Commercialisation Strategy T&F group report	Policy Devel'pt	BTSP
Oct	Zero Carbon Partnership	Partnership	HWSP
	Budget monitoring Q1 2021/22	Monitoring	BTSP
	Emerging agile working policy/ staff survey	Policy Devel'pt	BTSP
Nov	Cumbria Choice - accessibility and performance	Policy update	HWSP
	Performance Report - Q2	Monitoring	HWSP
	Draft Healthy city Strategy - post Covid re-build	Policy update	HWSP
	Sickness Absence Q2	Monitoring	BTSP
	Budget monitoring Q2 2021/22	Monitoring	BTSP
Jan	Carlisle Partnership - Place project & External funding project	Policy update	HWSP
	Strategic framework for Culture in Carlisle	Policy update	HWSP
	Local Hub developments (Community Safety)	Policy Devel'pt	HWSP
	Performance Report - Q3	Monitoring	HWSP
Feb	Community centre update	Policy update	HWSP
	GLL	Partnership	HWSP
	Sickness Absence Q3	Monitoring	BTSP
April	Homelessness - update on delivery of Strategy	Policy update	HWSP
	Local Government reorganisation	Policy Devel'pt	HWSP
	Scrutiny Annual Report	Policy Devel'pt	HWSP
	Emergency Planning - Community Engagement	Policy update	HWSP
	Budget monitoring Q3 2021/22	Monitoring	BTSP
	Corporate Projects	Monitoring	BTSP
	Corporate Risk Register	Monitoring	BTSP

Place Panel – Example workplan based upon 2021-22 workplans for current Panels

Meeting month	Item	Type of Scrutiny	Current panel
June	Local Environment (Climate Change) Strategy	Policy Devel'pt	HWSP
	End of Year Performance Report	Monitoring	EGSP
	Sands Centre Project Monitoring Report	Monitoring	BTSP
July	Cumbria Coastal Strategy and Shoreline Management Plan	Policy update	HWSP
	Draft Carlisle Plan	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
	Events - planned events and city centre vitality	Policy update	EGSP
	High Street Task Force - quick wins for City Centre	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
Sept	Civic Centre Re-instatement and Development	Monitoring	BTSP
	Covid-19 Recovery Update - focus on Economic Growth	Policy update	EGSP
	Economic Strategy Action Plan - performance	Monitoring	EGSP
	Economic Development PMO	Policy update	EGSP
	Performance Report - Q1	Monitoring	EGSP
Oct	Local Air Quality Action Plan	Policy update	HWSP
	Housing Assistance Grants - DFGs, repair assistance and empty property grants	Policy update	HWSP
	Delivering SCGV - ensuring the right resources and skills	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
	Making best use of existing housing stock (private sector housing)	Policy update	EGSP
	Tourism - delivering this strand of the Economic Strategy	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
Nov	Tullie House Business Plan	Partnership	HWSP
	Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (CWIPS)	Policy Devel'pt	HWSP
	Performance Report - Q2	Monitoring	EGSP
	Infrastructure for connectivity	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
	High Street Task Force - quick wins for City Centre	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
	Sands Centre Project Monitoring Report		BTSP
Jan	Diversifying the City Centre	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
	Kingmoor Park Update	Partnership	EGSP
	Performance Report - Q3	Monitoring	EGSP
Feb	Enforcement Strategy - update on recent activity	Policy update	HWSP
	Active spaces - update on plan	Policy update	HWSP
	Sands Centre Project Monitoring Report		BTSP
	LEP - Partner Update	Partnership	EGSP
	Economic Development PMO	Policy update	EGSP
	Scrutiny Annual Report	Policy Devel'pt	EGSP
April	End of Year Performance Report	Monitoring	EGSP
	Riverside - regeneration of existing stock	Partnership	EGSP
	Economic Strategy Action Plan - performance	Monitoring	EGSP
	Flood Risk Management	Partnership	EGSP
	Corporate Projects	Monitoring	BTSP
	Corporate Risk Register	Monitoring	BTSP

Resources Panel – Example workplan based upon 2021-22 workplans for current Panels

Meeting month	Item	Type of Scrutiny	Current panel
August	Medium Term Financial Plan	Policy Devel'pt	BTSP
	Asset Management Plan and Annual Property Survey Report	Policy Devel'pt	BTSP
	Capital Investment Strategy	Policy Devel'pt	BTSP
Dec	Budget Setting	Budget	BTSP
Jan	Budget Setting (Including Treasury Management Strategy Statement)	Budget	BTSP

Summary of Work plan breakdown by Panel (based upon 2021-22 workplans)

Panel – current 3 Panels	Items covered per year (based upon 2021/22 workplans)	Number of meetings in year
BTSP	33	8
EGSP	24	8
HWSP	30	8
Panels – People/ Place		
People	39	8
Place	38	8
Resources	5	3

Appendix 3: Key Points from Corporate Peer Challenge (Jan 2020) and LGA Peer Support (Nov 2020)

Summary of Corporate Peer Challenge 1 (January 2020) findings on scrutiny - synopsis

The main recommendation from the Corporate Peer Challenge with regard to scrutiny was:
> *"Review current arrangements for scrutiny and consider alternative options. This should enable more focused scrutiny of performance, implementation of decisions and contribution to the development of policy in priority areas. It should consider how to support more timely decision making and take account of the reduction in the number of councillors since the 2018 boundary review." (page 3, CPC)*

Further detail from within the report suggested that:
> *"Scrutiny activity should be re-focused on major issues and areas where input into policy development is being particularly sought or where scrutiny can make a positive difference to communities and the delivery of Council priorities." (page 10, CPC)*

Scrutiny of budget proposals and performance were both highlighted as areas where scrutiny had the potential to add greater value. There were also comments around process driven consideration of reports leading to missed opportunities for influence and added value.

LGA Peer Support (November 2020) findings on scrutiny – extracts of text

"Explore the potential role of Scrutiny further, building on the good will and appetite for increased impact and focus.

There is a consistent view that Scrutiny would be much more impactful in Carlisle if it balanced more of its work towards deeper, more focussed items of most critical importance to the district. The use of working groups in Carlisle are frequently cited as the examples where wider member engagement has created particularly insightful input into strategy and policy development. Examples of this can be seen in relation to the St Cuthbert's Programme and around the Equality Policy.

There is clear support and encouragement from the Executive to have more considered insight of this nature, particularly where the work is focussed at a meaningful depth and is time limited (to help avoid drift/loss of focus). The open, supportive and challenging balance here will remain important.

In pockets there is a clear understanding of 'the art of the possible' in terms of the various different ways in which Scrutiny could choose to operate. Widening this understanding can

have a role in helping Scrutiny to provide the type of insight, input and challenge that the Executive are keen to see.

- **Recommendation 5** – *provide Chairs of Scrutiny with further dedicated support.* This can take the form of training, such as in deciding agendas which focus more on the key strategic issues and avoiding the overly operational. It can also help in shaping strong, meaningful recommendations. This offer of support, would also include the type of informal, open relationship Chairs of Scrutiny have with the Leader and Executive. It also includes the type of support officers provide them with.

- **Recommendation 6** – *officers working with Scrutiny and Chairs of Scrutiny are encouraged to speak with colleagues in councils elsewhere to share further learning in regards to the different ways of operating Scrutiny* – which can include the methods that can be adopted by working groups, as well as other ways of engaging key 'expert witnesses'. The LGA are happy to connect the Council with colleagues elsewhere who would be happy to help with this.

  - **Recommendation 7** – *further support and training for members of scrutiny, including for asking questions and the different methods of providing scrutiny.* This can help to give members of Overview and Scrutiny further confidence in their roles and the value of this role.

  - **Recommendation 8** – *whilst the role of scrutiny should be an important consideration for all senior officers, identifying and communicating a clear senior officer champion for Scrutiny can help to drive this agenda.* This senior lead can help to progress the actions and improvements identified in relation to scrutiny, be a senior officer voice for the role of scrutiny and can support scrutiny officers to challenge both officers and members in relation to the role of scrutiny and how to engage with it. Having this can also help further empower scrutiny in deciding its own agenda, breaking down any obstacles that may present themselves (as appropriate).

The Council currently operates with three Scrutiny committees, which is the same model the Council had in place before the LGBCE boundary review which reduced the number of members from 52 to 39 in May 2019. The Scrutiny committees have different, dedicated chairs, one from the Conservative group, one from the Labour group and the third being an Independent member. This reflects the tight political balance of the Council.

Members and officers across the Council are familiar with a debate about whether this three committee structure remains the most effective structure for Overview and Scrutiny. In the spirit of giving an honest reflection back based on what the team heard, we found almost no member or officers who were particular fans of the current model.

Almost everyone the team asked, preferred a model with fewer committees to allow for a more concentrated use of the skills available to the Council. Efforts have been made in the past to move from this model, which have been delayed due to the amount of time left before the Annual General Meeting.

•   **Recommendation 9** – *consider the structure for Scrutiny and look again at the options for reducing the number of committees.* In light of the Council's wishes for improvement in Scrutiny, and in light of the reduction in the number of seats in May 2019, it is the view of the peer team that the Council would be well served by moving to a model with one committee. Building and brokering agreement on any alternative structure may need the support of the CEX but having these discussions can be important to the improvements you are trying to achieve. Equally, should agreement be found on this, ensuring this is implemented and not restricted by a date set for the AGM will avoid this debate repeating again.

As a 'half-way house' should the Council arrive at a decision to reduce the number of Scrutiny committees to two for example, ensuring there is a clear distinction between the committees and that they are aligned to the new Carlisle Plan will be important. When required, shared items can take place through joint working groups. This can help to avoid duplication of member and officer effort and a more rounded set of recommendations for the Executive.

•   **Recommendation 10** – *all of the above is multi-faceted, involving a number of people and actions. Having a specific Scrutiny improvement plan in place that brings this all together will aid progress."*

Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Task & Finish Group Report

An efficiency and efficacy review of the current governance structures of the Council

Part 1: A review of scrutiny arrangements

Version: 1.2

Contents

Recommendations

1. The Task & Finish Group consider a move to 2 panels as preferable, but would like more evidence on the likely efficiencies and improvements, in particular the need for mandatory training in Overview & Scrutiny skills
2. The panels are made up of between 8 and 10 members
3. The panels meet every 6 weeks

Introduction

The Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel Task & Finish Group has been established to scrutinise the governance arrangements for the Council. The tasks will be tackled in the following order:

- Overview and Scrutiny
- Statutory and other Committees / Panels

This report sets out the first part of the review, Overview & Scrutiny. The report sets out the background to the review, the methodology and analysis. The current arrangements, recent reviews and key areas of discussion are included, most notably:

- Parliamentary Review of Local Authority Scrutiny Function
- The Local Government Boundary Commission Review
- Task & Finish Groups
- Frequency and time of meetings
- Cross-cutting issues

The report summarises the current scrutiny arrangements for groups of similar selected Councils. In addition, three Councils are reviewed in more detail. An overview of all governance arrangements is included for context, this will form the second part of the review.

The report draws conclusions and presents three recommendations.

Background

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 & Finish Group would include the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Business & 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.

Through the 2017/18 Annual Scrutiny Report it was agreed that in the new civic year, the Scrutiny Chairs Group will continue to review the number, frequency and remits of the three panels alongside the Local Government Boundary Commission Review. The Scrutiny Chairs Group planned to consult with the three panels throughout 2018/19.

The Scrutiny Chairs Group met on 16 August and discussed the future structure of the scrutiny function. It was resolved that the best way forward would be to establish a Cross Party Working Group to determine an appropriate and efficient future structure.

Subsequent advice from the Corporate Director of Governance & Regulatory Services was to the effect that, if Members wished to have such a Task and Finish group then it should

come under the ambit of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel as the Chairs' Group did not have a remit for this type of action.

On the 18 October The Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel was asked to consider:

- Whether the scope of any review should be around Scrutiny, or a more broadly-based review of governance structures.
- Whether a separate Task and Finish Group should be established to take this matter forward.
- In the event that the Panel agreed to limit any review to the scrutiny function, to agree what additional information from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer was needed to allow a decision to be made.

The Task & Finish Group met on 18 October 2018 and agreed:

- The work should be completed swiftly so that any recommendations from the Task & Finish Group could be tabled as an agenda item at the January Panel meeting or a special meeting.
- The objective, if a consensus is reached is to debate the new proposals at Council in March 2019 for implementation in the Civic Year 2019/20.

The Task & Finish Group met again on 29 November 2018 and agreed the methodology set out in the report. In addition, the Corporate Director of Governance & Regulatory Services (Monitoring Officer) was asked to prepare a timetable for consultation that ensured that any agreed changes could be put to Council in April for implementation in the Civic Year 2019/20.

This timetable was circulated on the 30 November and agreed by the Chair, the first deadline being the Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel 3 January 2018. The timetable is presented in Table 4.

The Task & Finish Group met on 13 December 2018 and agreed some additional information for the report, to be signed off by the Chair and Vice Chair. At this meeting Councillor Alcroft attended in place of Councillor McDonald.

The Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel (Special) were consulted on this report, their views will be part of the agenda for the Special Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel meeting on 22 February 2019.

The Scrutiny Chairs Group met on 24 January and discussed the review and report.

The Task & Finish Group met on 14 February 2019 and agreed some minor amendments and additional evidence for the report. These changes had been incorporated into this version.

Methodology

It was agreed that the review will include the following elements:

1) A description and analysis of the current arrangements. This will include the broad metrics of the current structures but will also include comments from relevant members and key officers, around strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. Group leaders will be invited to comment as part of this exercise.

The timetable agreed in table 4 will enable consultation around the scope for improvement. At each meeting Members and key officers will be consulted on the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.

2) An analysis of possible drivers for change. This will follow from (1) above and will include:

- Any new guidance from Government, especially around Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.
- The expected reduced number of Councillors from May 2019.
- The need to continue to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements.
- The need to consider, in terms of scrutiny, a growing number of 'cross cutting' issues, which would be better managed in a more streamlined scrutiny approach.

3) A material part of the work will be to compare the structural arrangements in this Council with those in similar sized second tier Councils.
4) The review will also take account of any relevant national guidance and / or principles or examples of good practice, where possible.

Whilst a review of any one part of the governance structure needs to be undertaken in the context of possible commitments in the other parts, it is suggested that the work be undertaken in the following priority order: -
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Statutory and other Committees / Panels

Current arrangements

Scrutiny operates through three panels: Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel; Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

There are eight non-Executive members on each panel and each panel is politically balanced (i.e. the proportions of each political party on the panel are the same as on the Council as a whole). Individual Councillors are selected by their political parties to sit on the scrutiny panels. Each panel has a work programme and meets on a 6-weekly cycle. The link to the detailed procedure rules and remits for each panel is presented in Appendix A.

The use of substitutes for meetings is a common occurrence, it is rare for a panel meeting not to include a substitute. This occurrence highlights that it is a challenge to sustain full attendance for the nominated panel members throughout the year. This can have an impact on the panel's ability to build expertise and knowledge. Additionally, with many substitutions occurring very close to panel meetings, substitutes are often placed in a difficult position by not having time to prepare properly for meetings.

The three work programmes are developed to fulfil the current arrangements, three panels need three work programmes and a 6-weekly cycle needs at least one item per meeting. On average, panel agendas have 3 agenda items per meeting.

Initial feedback on changing the current arrangements has been received from Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel. This feedback is presented in Appendix B.

Parliamentary review of the Local Authority Scrutiny Function

The Communities and Local Government Select Committee completed a review of the Local Authority Scrutiny Function in December 2017. The recommendations of the Committee and the subsequent response by Government (in March 2018) is presented in Appendix C. The Government has promised to issue new guidance later this year to replace the current guidance, which was issued in 2006. An update on progress has been posted on the Centre for Public Scrutiny website: https://www.cfps.org.uk/an-update-on-the-scrutiny-guidance/

The new guidance will not be prescriptive. The decision on how to undertake the scrutiny role rests with individual Councils. It is the Government's view that each council is best placed to decide which arrangements best suit its own individual circumstances.

The Local Government Boundary Commission Review (LGBCE)

The review has been completed and the finalised recommendations are:

- Carlisle should be represented by 39 councillors, 13 fewer than there are now.
- Carlisle should have 13 wards, nine fewer than there are now.
- The boundaries of all wards should change; none will stay the same.

The LGBCE concluded that decreasing the number of councillors by 13 would still ensure that the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament and the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections on 2 May 2019.

Applying the 39 members to current arrangements could mean that 24 (3x8) members will be on scrutiny panels. A more likely outcome is that continuing with the status quo will require a greater reliance on a smaller number of members and subsequently a continued use of substitutes.

Table 1 below, illustrates the reduction and its impact on availability of members for scrutiny.

Table 1: Estimated percentage of members on scrutiny

Item	2018-19	2019-20
Total membership	52	39
Executive	6	6 (assumed)
Mayor	1	1
Available for scrutiny	45	32
Needed for scrutiny	24 (53%)	3 panel – 24 (75%) 2 panel – 16 or 20 (50 – 63%) 1 panel - 8 or 10 (25 – 31%)

Effective scrutiny is crucial to the Council carrying out its roles and responsibilities. Appointment to scrutiny is not just a simple numeric apportionment but rather a search for special skills capable of undertaking the scrutiny role. It is critical that scrutiny with a politically balanced membership.

Task & Finish Groups

Members have commented that the less formal, more flexible, Task & Finish Group approach to a work programme can be more interesting. A Task & Finish Group allows members to bring their expertise to bear on a priority in a more dynamic setting than a formal panel meeting. The Member Learning Group has recently undertaken a survey of members to develop a pool of members willing to share their expertise through Task & Finish Groups.

The current approach to Task & Finish Groups ensures that the Council's reputation for transparency is maintained through regular reporting back to the parent panel. The Overview Report provides the panel, the Council and the public with a regular update on progress made in any active Task & Finish Group. This approach has been proven to work well in recent years, most notably in the Community Asset Transfer Task & Finish Group.

The group is clear that:

- Task & Finish Groups should be open to all members, thereby ensuring the greatest opportunity for Member engagement in policy development.
- Task & Finish Groups should only be convened when there is a clear need, they are not a substitute for scrutiny panels.

A decision to reduce the number of panels will likely lead to internal efficiencies which could be redirected to increase the amount of task & finish group work undertaken.

Frequency and time of meetings

The group has discussed the options around the frequency and timing of the panel meetings. The Council meets on an 8-weekly cycle and Executive meets on a 6-weekly cycle. It would therefore be prudent to retain the 6-weekly cycle of Overview and Scrutiny in 2019/20. This will give the panel(s) the flexibility to respond to emerging issues and ensure a timely completion of 'call-ins'.

A discussion on the frequency of the panel meetings included the time of day. It was appreciated by the group that the morning meetings often excluded participation from members in employment. A consideration should be given to moving the meetings to the afternoon and it was noted that Executive met at 4 pm.

'Cross-cutting' issues

The experience of recent joint scrutiny panels and budget scrutiny has highlighted the challenges of 'cross cutting' issues. A more co-ordinated scrutiny process would present the following benefits:

- Avoid a duplication of member and officer effort.
- Avoid duplication of lines of inquiry by the three panels.
- Allow more in-depth scrutiny of the key issues.

The three major projects identified in the Carlisle Plan, Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, St Cuthbert's Garden Village and the Sands Centre Redevelopment, all have cross-cutting issues relating to economic growth, health, wellbeing and finances. An effective scrutiny will

be forward looking, scrutinising the most corporate and strategically cross-cutting of Council planned activity.

The performance report is presented at three panels every quarter, this an example of a cross-cutting issue divided into three separate reports. The risk management report, corporate programme report and finance monitoring reports are examples of cross-cutting issues that are only currently reported to a single panel.

Any changes arising from this review should clarify how these cross-cutting issues will be coordinated within the new arrangements. This will be considered alongside the work on panel name(s) and remits.

Comparison to the groups of similar authorities

Several groupings consisting of similar sized District Councils have been analysed to compare scrutiny arrangements. There are 4 groups: Cumbria Districts, Nearest Neighbours (from the previous Audit Commission grouping), Historic Cities and South Lakeland District Council's (SLDC) comparator group. The details of each of these groups are presented in appendix D.

Each of the groups are summarised in Table 2, Carlisle is only included in the Cumbria Districts Group and is excluded from the counts for each of the other groups.

Table 2: Summary of comparison groups (count of panels)

Group	Number of scrutiny panels				
	1 Panel	2 Panels	3 Panels	4 Or 5 Panels	Total
Cumbria Districts	4	1	1	0	6
Nearest Neighbours	4	5	3	3	15
Historic Cities	6	4	1	0	11
SLDC comparator group	12	0	1	0	13
Totals	26	10	6	3	45

The most frequent scrutiny arrangement within each of these groups is 1 or 2 panels.

Members should note that the number of panels is a rather basic comparator and doesn't itself show how industriously those panels undertake their duties. For that reason, the appendices also show the number of meetings held in a financial / civic year. That information (Appendix D) is summarised in table 3.

Table 3: Summary of comparison groups (count of meetings)

Authority grouping	Annual count of meetings		
	Low	High	Average
Cumbria	7	24	11
Nearest Neighbour	8	25	15
Historic Cities	4	24	13
SLDC Comparator Group	5	18	9

These figures, probably more than the more basic comparator based on the number of panels, demonstrate Carlisle's position as a relative outlier, with amongst the highest number of meetings from the 45 councils used in the comparative analysis.

Selected District Councils

Three District Councils have been selected to provide more detail on scrutiny arrangements with 2 or 1 panel(s). The three are Lancaster City Council, St. Edmundsbury Borough Council and Erewash Borough Council.

Comparison with Lancaster City Council (LCC)

LCC has undergone a LGBCE Review with the changes coming in May 2015 elections. The review concluded that the number of members remained at 60. LCC also underwent a Local Government Association Peer Review in 2015 which included an action to consider how to make best use of Overview & Scrutiny. The current arrangements are as follows:

Budget and Performance Panel

The purpose of this panel is to scrutinise the Council's arrangements and performance in relation to financial planning, including budget and target setting. The panel has a membership of 9 members and meets on a 9-week cycle, approximately, the meetings are in the evenings either at 6pm or 6:10pm.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has overall responsibility for the performance of all Overview and Scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee can create Task Groups and sets their Terms of Reference. The Committee has moved towards a more informal way of working which tends to deliver results more quickly. Looking back at 2017/18, as reported in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18, the Committee had the following:

- Customer Service and Future Complaints Policy Informal Task Group
- Digital Lancaster Informal Task Group
- Resilience Commission Informal Task Group

The Late-Night Economy in the Lancaster District Informal Task Group recommendations were reported to Cabinet and Council in 2017/18.

The Committee has a membership of 9 members and meets on a monthly cycle. The meetings are in the evenings either at 6pm, 6:10pm or 6:45pm.

Comparison with St. Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)

In May 2018, Parliament authorised the creation of a new local authority called West Suffolk Council. This council will replace the existing authorities of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The LGBCE is now carrying out an electoral review of the new council. St Edmundsbury Borough Council has 45 elected members.

SEBC has its own scrutiny arrangements for 2018/19 Civic Year and currently operates the following scrutiny committees arrangements:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee covers the key scrutiny functions, holding the Cabinet to account. The Committee has 14 members and meets a 6-weekly cycle, approximately, with the meetings held at 4pm.They have on average one task & finish group a year. This year they have had two joint task and finish groups with Forest Heath District Council:

- West Suffolk Information Strategy

- Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre

Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee scrutinises how well the Council's services are performing by considering a range of information such as performance indicators and reports from external inspectors and by monitoring action plans. The Committee has 10 members, meets on a quarterly corporate planning and budgetary cycle and the meetings are held at 5pm. The Committee does not carry out reviews but may recommend that a review is carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Comparison with Erewash Borough Council (EBC)

EBC underwent an LGBCE Review with the changes, a reduction of 4 councillors, made in May 2015. EBC has 47 elected members and a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee with 17 members. The Committee meets on a 6-weekly cycle, meeting at 6:30pm. The Committee has active Task & Finish Groups working on:

- Out of Hours Task and Finish Group
- Progress of the Implementation of Universal Credit
- Review of Kerbside Collections and Recycling Services Task and Finish Group
- Task and Finish Group on Safeguarding
- Task and Finish review of Water Safety

Overview of all other governance arrangements

There are prescribed arrangements for some of the statutory committees, including the range of members who can sit on them. There is therefore less scope to alter these arrangements and to improve their efficiency. This is the primary reason for leaving this task until a review of scrutiny has been completed.

A summary of the governance arrangements is presented in Appendix G to provide context for the review of scrutiny and a shared understanding for the next phase of the review. The Task & Finish Group will consider the wider governance arrangements once the recommendations for scrutiny have been shared for consultation, at the earliest this will be in January 2019.

Table 4: Summary of meetings and timetable for consultation

Date	Meeting	Activity
18 October	Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Task & Finish Group established
18 October	Task & Finish Group Meeting	Initial meeting
22 November	Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel	Panel discussed change and provided feedback
29 November	Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Panel discussed change and provided feedback
29 November	Task & Finish Group Meeting	Agree methodology and set timescale
13 December	Task & Finish Group Meeting	Agree draft report
3 January	Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Approve report for consultation
7 February	Special Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel	Consider report and recommendations
7 February	Special Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel	Consider report and recommendations
22 February	Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Approve for Council via Monitoring Officer
11 March	Executive	Executive have four weeks to consider the report before it goes to Council
30 April	Council	Council decision
20 May	Council	Annual Council implementation

Conclusions

The majority of scrutiny panel members agree that the current arrangements should be reduced from 3 panels.

The reduction of members from 52 to 39 for Civic Year 2019/20 is a key consideration, the function of scrutiny can be delivered with 39 members. How the scrutiny function is delivered is a decision for Council.

Nationally, work is underway to update the guidance for Overview & Scrutiny. The review found that the most significant factor in determining whether scrutiny committees are effective is the organisational culture of a council. The new guidance will not prescribe a scrutiny arrangement as this is a decision for each council.

Arrangements for cross-cutting issues should be considered once a recommendation for Council has been finalised. Historically, this issue has been resolved through discussions at the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

Carlisle has more scrutiny panels, meeting more frequently than any other District Council in Cumbria. It is increasingly rare to find any District Council operating three panels on a 6-weekly cycle, most have reduced the number of panels.

Any future work programmes for the new scrutiny arrangements will be developed with cognizance of the member and officer resources available. Prioritisation within the work programmes will ensure effective and efficient scrutiny.

To illustrate a 2-panel arrangement the following working titles and summary work themes (Appendix E) are suggested:

- Internal Overview & Scrutiny Panel with an inward-looking set of remits
- External Overview & Scrutiny Panel with an outward-looking set of remits

An analysis of the agenda items ([Appendix F](#)) confirms that a 2-panel structure would be practical, with an average of 5 items per panel meeting.

Recommendations

4. The Task & Finish Group consider a move to a 2-panel structure as preferable, but would like more evidence on the likely efficiencies and improvements, in particular the need for mandatory training in Overview & Scrutiny skills
5. The panels are made up of between 8 and 10 members
6. The panels meet every 6 weeks

A: Current scrutiny procedures and remits

Link: [Constitution Panel Remits](#)

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel Pages: 56-58

Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel Pages: 59-61

Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel Pages: 62-63

B: Initial feedback

As part of the process of reviewing the number of Scrutiny Panels, Chairs of the current three panel were asked for their views. These would ultimately be fed into the wider Task and Finish group review and reflected in any final proposals. The views put forward are set out below: -

Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel

The Chair of EGSP canvassed views at the meeting of the panel on 22 November 2018. A summary of the views of the panel is set out below: -

- One member thought that fewer panel members, but more panels would be a better way forward, with more clarity about the panel remits.
- It was recognised that changing panel numbers had been looked at previously, but there was now added focus, because of the reduction in councillor numbers expected in 2019. In that context, when taking account of the requirements to source (i) an executive and (ii) a number of statutory type committees, there would only be a small pool of councillors remaining, which led to the conclusion that a reduction was needed, to a maximum of 2, or perhaps a single overarching panel.
- There was a thought that maybe a reduction to a single panel would create too great a workload.
- Other views included: -
  - being more flexible around timing of meetings (evenings perhaps) - although other members saw this as potentially problematic, as they had a number of parish council commitments in the evenings.
  - Looking to improve the process of scrutiny could well be part of the solution (by doing things differently).
- In conclusion, the consensus appeared to be that a change was needed, and that a movement to two panels might be the best way forward at this stage.

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

The chair of the panel provided the following feedback…… 'I feel that with the number of tasks we have to do on Scrutiny, it would be wise to keep it at the three panels, otherwise two would end up being swamped.'

C: Parliamentary review of the Local Authority Scrutiny Function

1. Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees; a report by the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Department:

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcomloc/369/369.pdf

2. Government response to the Communities and Local Government Committee first report on the effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/communities-and-local-government/2017-19-Correspondence/Government-Response-to-the-Communities-and-Local-Government-Committee-First-Report-on-the-effectiveness-of-local-authority-overview-and-scrutiny-committees.pdf

D: Comparison groups

Cumbria's District Councils

Authority	Population (Mid-2016 estimates)	No of Panels / Committees	Frequency of meetings	Total meetings
Allerdale	97,000	1	6-weekly	8
Barrow	67,300	1	6-weekly	7
Copeland	69,300	1*	6-weekly	10
Eden	52,600	2	10-weekly	10
South Lakeland	103,300	1	8-weekly	7
Carlisle	108,400	3	6-weekly	24

*A sub-committee also exists.

https://www.allerdale.gov.uk/en/council-and-democracy/scrutiny-committee/

https://barrowbc.gov.uk/about-the-council/barrow-council/council-minutes-agendas/overview-and-scrutiny-committee/

https://copeland.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1

https://democracy.eden.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1

http://democracy.southlakeland.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1

Carlisle City Council – Nearest Neighbour Scrutiny arrangements

Authority	Population	No. of Panels / Committees	Frequency of Meetings	Total meetings
East Staffordshire	117,600	2	6 weekly	14
Wyre Forest	100,700	1	10 per year	10
Cannock Chase	99,100	4	Quarterly	16
Bassetlaw	116,300	1	Monthly	12
South Kesteven	141,700	5	5 per year	25
Mansfield	108,600	3	6 weekly	24
Newcastle under Lyme	129,000	3	Quarterly	12
Tamworth	75,600	3	6 weekly	24
Chesterfield	104,600	2	2 monthly	12
Erewash	115,300	1	6 weekly	8
St Edmundsbury	113,700	2	6 weekly	16
Nuneaton and Bedworth	128,700	4	Quarterly	16
Kettering	100,300	2	5 per year	10
Lancaster	142,500	2	Monthly + 5 per year	17
Taunton Deane	117,400	1	6 weekly	9
Carlisle	108,300	3	6 weekly	24

http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/council-democracy/committees

http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/committees/com193.htm

https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/council-committees/schedule-memberships-cabinet-committees-and-other-bodies

http://data.bassetlaw.gov.uk/browse-the-catalogue/council-agendas-and-minutes/overview-scrutiny-committee.aspx

http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=496&J=8

http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/scrutiny

https://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=

http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1

https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/your-council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx#

https://moderngov.erewash.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=327

https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=130

https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/info/20050/council_elections_and_meetings/309/overview_and_scrutiny/1

https://www.kettering.gov.uk/info/20007/councillors_mps_and_decision_making/12034/council_and_committees/2

https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=298&MId=7233&Ver=4

https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/democratic/council-meetings-minutes-agendas/

Carlisle City Council - Historic Cities – Scrutiny Arrangements

Authority	Population	No of panels	Frequency	Total meetings	T&F Groups (17/18)
Mansfield	108,600	3	6 weekly	24	(3) 2
Lancaster	142,500	2	Monthly + 5 per year	17	(3) 2
Ipswich	138,500	1	6 weekly	8	(4) 2
Gloucester	129,100	1	Monthly + budget	13	Requested
Eastbourne	103,300	1	Quarterly	4	Requested
Dover	158,800	2	Monthly	24	(0) 0
Cheltenham	117,100	1	6 weekly	8	Requested
Boston	68,500	2	6 weekly	14	Requested
Bedford		Excluded on basis that it is a unitary authority			N/A
Bassetlaw	116,300	1	Monthly	12	Requested
Amber Valley	125,900	1	2 Monthly	6	Requested
St Edmundsbury	113,700	2	6 weekly	16	2 (2)
Swale	146,700	1	6 Weekly	8	Requested
Carlisle	108,300	3	6 Weekly	24	(2) 1

Information on current and 2017/18 Task & Finish Groups have been requested. The responses are recorded in the 'T&F Groups (17/18)' column. The number in brackets is the count for 2017/18.

http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/scrutiny

https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=298&MId=7233&Ver=4

https://democracy.ipswich.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=136

https://democracy.gloucester.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=408

http://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=128

www.dover.gov.uk/Council--Democracy/Scrutiny/Committees.aspx

https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=267&Year=0

http://moderngov.boston.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=

http://data.bassetlaw.gov.uk/browse-the-catalogue/council-agendas-and-minutes/overview-scrutiny-committee.aspx

https://www.ambervalley.gov.uk/council/committees-and-meetings/

https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=130

https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/mgCalendarAgendaView.aspx?XXR=0&M=1&DD=2017&ACT=Go&WN=1&CID=139&OT=R&MR=1&

South Lakeland DC nearest neighbour comparator councils

Authority	Population	No. of Panels / Committees	Frequency of Meetings (pa is per annum)	Total meetings
Wealden	158,900	1	6	6
South Hams	85,300	1	10pa	10
Teignbridge	131,400	1	10pa	10
East Devon	142,300	1	12	12
Cotswold	87,500	1	5	5
West Dorset	102,100	1	8	8
Chichester	120,200	1	6	6
Wychavon	125,400	1	9	9
Hambleton	90,700	1	8	8
New Forest	179,600	3	6	18
Lewes	102,300	1	6	6
Stratford upon Avon	125,200	1	12	12
Suffolk Coastal	129,000	1	12	12
Carlisle	108,300	3	6 weekly	24

Links not included.

E: Suggested 2 panel scrutiny arrangement, working titles and summary work themes

Any changes arising from this review should clarify how cross-cutting issues will be coordinated within the new arrangements. This will be considered alongside the work on panel name(s) and remits.

Items in bold text have featured on the work programmes for 2018/19, remits that have not featured as agenda items are covered by the budget scrutiny and quarterly performance report.

External Overview & Scrutiny Panel

To fulfil all the functions and have all the powers and responsibilities of a Crime and Disorder Committee under the provisions of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and any relevant regulations or guidance.

Bereavement Services 3	Environmental Strategy 1/3	*Performance Monitoring 2*
Business Support 4	Events 1	**Public Realm 3**
Car parking 3	Food Safety 3	**Regeneration 4**
City Centre 3	Greenspaces 3	**Sport and leisure 6**
Community development 5	**Health and Wellbeing 5**	**Strategic partnerships 1**
Community Safety 5	**Heritage 4**	**Tourism 6**
Cultural Strategy 6	**Homelessness Strategy 4**	Town Twinning 1
Disabled Facilities Grants 5	**Housing Strategy 4**	**Tullie House Trust 6**
Economic development 4	**Inward Investment 4**	Waste and recycling 3
Emergency Planning 1	**Local Plans and planning 4**	Welfare and advice 4
Environmental Health and Protection 3	Neighbourhoods 3	Youth engagement 1

Internal Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Asset Management 2	**Financial Monitoring 2**	Organisation Development 2
Budget Framework 2	Governance Framework 2	**Performance Management Framework and Performance Monitoring 2**
Business continuity 1	Health & Safety (internal) 2	
Communication and marketing 1	Human Resources 2	Procurement 2
Corporate Plan 1	ICT 2	**Property (strategic) 2/4**
Corporate Programme and Projects 2	Information Governance 2	Revenues and Benefits 2
	Insurance 2	**Risk Management 2**
Customer contact & care 5	Internal Audit 2	Service Reviews 2
Efficiency Plans 2	Legal, Licensing and Regulation 2	**Strategic Finance 2**
Electoral Registration 2	**Medium Term Financial Plan 2**	**Treasury Management 2**
Equality Policy 5		**Workforce Development 2**
External Funding 2	Member training and development 2	

Portfolio Holder Key:

1	Leader
2	Finance, Governance & Resources
3	Environment & Transport
4	Economy, Enterprise & Housing
5	Communities, Health & Wellbeing
6	Culture, Heritage & Leisure

F: Analysis of Overview & Scrutiny agenda items

Year 2018/19 (based on initial work programme and actual meetings)

Panel	Number of meetings	Agenda items	Average
Business & Transformation	8	30	3.8
Economic Growth	8	23	2.9
Health & Wellbeing	8	23	2.9

Year 2017/18

Panel	Number of meetings	Agenda items	Average
Business & Transformation	8	31	3.9
Economic Growth	8	23	2.9
Health & Wellbeing	8	27	3.4

Year 2016/17

Panel	Number of meetings	Agenda items	Average
Resources	8	39	4.9
Economy	8	27	3.4
Community	8	25	3.1

For a 3-panel structure this averages 3 items per agenda for each panel

(284 items/72 meetings)

For a 2 -panel structure this averages 5 items per agenda for each panel

(248 items/48 meetings)

Please Note:

Panel names and remits were changes during 2017-18

Analysis is for normal business and therefore excludes special meetings and task and finish group meetings

G: Summary of current governance structure:
COMMITTEES AND PANELS (TO BE APPOINTED BY COUNCIL)

Name	Frequency	Current	Minimum	Maximum	Legislation and notes
Appeals Panel (3)	As required	3 plus 3 subs – 18 members in total			A Member cannot hear a complaint if: They know the Complainant The Complainant resides in their ward They were involved in the decision i.e. Planning Permission
Audit Committee	Nominally quarterly, but in the last few years an additional meeting has been held in July to agree the sign off accounts	7 plus 7 subs			No member of the Executive and no Chair of Scrutiny Panels will be eligible to be a Member of the Audit Committee
Development Control Committee	6 weeks	12 plus 7 subs			Training to attend these committees is mandatory
Employment Panel	As required	6 plus 6 subs			One Executive Member must be a member of the Employment Panel
Licensing Committee	Quarterly –meetings coincide with Regulatory Panel	12 plus 7 subs	10	15	Licensing Act 2003. Committee can delegate to sub-committees (see over). No need for political balance. Training to attend these committees is mandatory
Regulatory Panel	6 weekly	12 plus 7 subs			Council has decided on same membership as Licensing Committee Training to attend these committees is mandatory
Scrutiny Panels (3)	6weeks	8 – plus 7 subs* for each Panel except BTSP which has 6			Executive Members cannot be members of Scrutiny Panels Local Government Act 1972. Guidance advises that Panels should meet frequently and be cross cutting. Must be politically balanced.
Standards Committee	As required	7 – plus 7 subs			Must be politically balanced. May contain non-voting Members – S104 LGA '72

COMMITTEES / GROUPS NOT APPOINTED BY COUNCIL: The following Sub-Committees are appointed by the Licensing Committee:

Name	Frequency	Current	Minimum	Maximum	Legislation and notes
Licensing Sub–Committee (4)	As required	3 – plus 3 subs per Cmttee = the 12 substantive members of the licensing Committee and its substitutes			No need for political balance. Training to attend these committees is mandatory Members who attend the meeting must not be the relevant Ward Member

COMMITTEES / GROUPS NOT APPOINTED BY COUNCIL – APPOINTMENTS MADE BY THE LEADER OR BY OTHER COMMITTEES/GROUPS

Name	Frequency	Current	Minimum	Maximum	Legislation and notes
Executive	4 weeks	6	Leader + 2 cannot include Mayor or Deputy Mayor	10	Local Government Act 2000 Appointment by the Leader
Joint Consultative Group					Appointment by the Leader
Market Management Group	Bi-annual	3			Appointed by the Leader's Scheme of Delegation so are Executive Members Appointment by the Leader

http://intranet.carlisle.gov.uk/yourcouncil/dirser/legal/demserv/Documents/Committee%20Membership%202018-19%20-%20Annual%20Council%2021%2005%2018.doc

*Consideration should be given to establishing a bank of named substitutes which could attend any of the three Scrutiny Panels.

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2019

EGSP.08/19   TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT – AN EFFICIENCY AND EFFICACY REVIEW OF THE CURRENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF THE COUNCIL

The Policy and Communications Manager submitted OS.01/19 – Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel Task and Finish Group Report: An efficiency and efficacy review of the current governance structures of the Council. The two principal drivers which had precipitated the review were: the Local Government's Boundary Commission for England's Review of electoral wards in the district and its recommendation that the number of Elected Members at the authority be reduced from 52 to 39 and; recent national government's guidance on local authority scrutiny function.

Communications had been sent to each of the Political Groups and Group Leaders to inviting their views. The Policy and Communications Manager emphasised that the report was a working document which would be adapted as a result of input into the process. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel were scheduled to consider the matter at a special meeting on 7 February 2019 and the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel would consider the matter on 22 February 2019.

In considering the report Members raised the following questions and concerns:

A Member commented that the report was useful to a degree, particularly the comparison data with other local authorities. However, he felt that the report had not addressed the issues of efficiency and efficacy. In his view scrutiny was an important function, and whilst it was reasonable to consider the number of Panel, memberships, frequency of meetings, the issue of effectiveness was a more important consideration.

The Member noted that the report referred to a Parliamentary Review of Local Authority Scrutiny Function which outlined a number of metrics for assessing the effectiveness of scrutiny, he suggested that it be used as a template for further evidence gathering for the review into the Council's current governance arrangements.

The Policy and Communications Manager acknowledged the Member's comments, the Parliamentary Review had placed a significant emphasis or organisational culture, accordingly, such an approach would require the gathering of Member and Officer views. Developing a methodology to judge effectiveness in a valid way, required the comparison of activity against identified standards, of which there were none.

The Policy and Communications Manager indicated that the effectiveness of scrutiny was a judgement for Members to make, and that they may wish to consider the following as standards: the number of Panel resolutions which had impacted on Executive decision making; the number of Call-ins; number of Members involved in policy development through Task and Finish groups.

The Member appreciated the Officer's comments but reiterated his view that the methodology used in the Parliamentary Review constituted a useful template for the Council employ in its review.

The Chairman commented that it was a difficult issue and noted that there had been a review of scrutiny in the previous Municipal Year which had changed Panel remits. The current review had essentially provided an options exercise which questioned the sustainability of the number of Panels going forward. He felt that the proposed reduction in the number of Councillors was not the prerequisite for change, rather a consideration of the effectiveness of the function.

A number of Members supported the view that an assessment of the effectiveness of scrutiny should come before a review of the number of Panels and frequency of meetings. Moreover, it was important that a sufficient body of evidence was compiled to enable Members to meaningfully consider the issues.

A Member considered that policy development was an important aspect of the scrutiny function and that the low number of call-ins was a result of that. Consequently, such activity was important for involving Members in the Council's work. In terms of the proposals contained in the report he welcomed greater use of Task and Finish Group work and indicated that he felt able to support a proposal for 2 Panels, going forward.

Another Member noted that there had been one Task and Finish Group in the current Municipal year, and two in the preceding year. In the context of the review, she did not support the proposal of reducing the overall number of Panels as a vehicle for increasing Task and Finish Group work. Additionally, she felt that in assigning work to Task and Finish Groups there ought to be a checklist used to identify suitable items.

The Chairman sought Member's agreement that the Panel supported the resolution of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel on 3 January *"That the Task and Finish Group continue to gather further evidence to be submitted to the Business and Transformation Panel at its special meeting along with feedback from consultation with the Groups and other Scrutiny Panels",* (Minute excerpt BTSP.09/19 (2) refers).

A Member commented that there would be a new Council in May, which may or may not be supportive of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, therefore it was important that there was a body of valid evidence for the organisation to consider whether its scrutiny function was effective.

RESOLVED – 1) That report OS.01/19 – Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel Task and Finish Group Report: An efficiency and efficacy review of the current governance structures of the Council be received.

2) That the Panel supported the resolution of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel on 3 January *"That the Task and Finish Group continue to gather further evidence to be submitted to the Business and Transformation Panel at its special meeting along with feedback from consultation with the Groups and other Scrutiny Panels",* (Minute excerpt BTSP.09/19 (2) refers).

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2019

HWSP.11/19   TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT – AN EFFICIENCY AND EFFICACY REVIEW OF THE CURRENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF THE COUNCIL

The Policy and Communications Manager submitted OS.02/19 – Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel Task and Finish Group Report: An efficiency and efficacy review of the current governance structures of the Council. The report outlined the stages and timetable for the review with the overall report having been approved by the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel Task and Finish Group as a suitable consultation document for the Panels to consider.

The Policy and Communications Manager stated the review was a work in progress and drew Members' attention to the report recommendations, the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel had discussed the matter on 17 January, its comments and issues raised therein had been considered at the Scrutiny Chairs Group on 24 January.   The purpose of the work was to develop an informed evidenced based report for the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel Task and Finish Group to consider and determine the next steps for the review.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- Referring to the report recommendations, that future Panels be made up of between 8 and 10 Members, was that number prescribed?

The Policy and Communications Manager responded that he had looked at legislation regarding the make-up of Council Panels and that there was no stipulation on the numbers required to make up a scrutiny panel. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England, who had recommended a reduction in the overall number of Councillors at the authority, indicated that the scrutiny function was sustainable going forward.

In terms of the recommendation of 8 – 10 Members the Policy and Communications Manager advised that level of membership had been proposed on the basis of a reduction in the number of Panels and was aimed at sustaining the level of Member participation in the scrutiny function.

- The Chairman sought clarification that the report proposed an internal facing Panel and external facing Panel for the future.

The Policy and Communications Manager responded that the Council had previously conducted a review of its scrutiny function which had created the current Panels' remits. Appendix E of the report, which illustrated a two Panel model had been a consideration during that earlier review.

The Chairman responded that, in his view, a reduction to two Panel would mean that the workload for those Panels would be too vast and would lead to excessively lengthy meetings.

Another Member commented that he felt there were pros and cons to each model, he considered that a single Panel would be a workable format, although it would require a higher number of seats than any of the current individual Panels.

A Member stated that he considered scrutiny was an important function within the authority however, he felt the matter ought to be determined by the Council in the new Civic Year. He further indicated that he was supportive of three Panels with the chairmanships being allocated as follows: 1 Conservative, 1 Labour, and 1 Independent.

Responding to a question from a Member regarding the capacity to amend the timetable for the review, the Policy and Communications Manager noted that the report recommendations requested comments on that point. Were Members minded to amend the timetable to enable any decision on the scrutiny function to be taken in the forthcoming Civic Year, that was an important issue to feedback to the Task and Finish Group. In his view there were 2 aspects to the review: the number of Panels and there remits and; the timetable for making a decision, both of which were matters for Members.

- Who would decide whether recommendations on the future governance arrangements for scrutiny would be submitted to Council?

The Policy and Communications Manager advised that the Special meeting of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel on 22 February 2019 would decide how the review would be progressed, including whether any recommendations were to be made to Council.

A Member indicated, that were the Panel to vote on any agreement of principle in relation to the review, he would abstain, as he felt the matter ought to be determined in the new Civic Year.

The Chairman stated that he felt his interests were conflicted due to his chairmanship of the Panel. He reiterated that he considered three Panels to be the most appropriate system going forward, but stated that he would leave Members to decide the matter.

A Member sought clarification that the Panel was not required to vote on the matter, but to provide comments to the Task and Finish Group for their consideration.

The Policy and Communications Manager confirmed that the Panel was required to provide comments on the report recommendations. The minutes of the meeting would record the Panel's view, but it was not necessary for a consensus to be achieved.

A Member moved that a 2 Panel system be adopted with an increased number of seats on each. It was a matter for the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel to decide how to progress the issue. The proposal was seconded and put to the vote. The vote was carried.