



Report of: Councillor Kelham Cooke, the Deputy Leader of the Council

Report to:	Council
Date:	22 November 2018
Subject:	Establishment of a Working Group to undertake a review of Council Committees in preparation for the municipal year from May 2019 (LDS331)

Decision Proposal:	Council Decision
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Kelham Cooke, the Deputy Leader of the Council
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SUMMARY

A new Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2025 was agreed by Council in May 2018. It is timely that a Working Group be established to review the operation of the Committees of the Council in order that they are strong, efficient and agile enough to deliver the Corporate Strategy in future years.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That a Working Group of nine Members of the Council, as set out in 1.6 below be appointed to undertake a review of the Committees of the Council in preparation for the municipal year from May 2019.
2. That the findings and recommendations of the Working Group be reported to Council on 28 February 2019.

1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT

- 1.1 Since the Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2025 was agreed by Council in May 2018, the Council's Committee structure should now be reviewed to ensure that it will be strong, efficient and agile enough to deliver the Corporate Strategy in future years.
- 1.2 Other Councils such as Guildford, Crawley, Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Canterbury, Horsham, Tunbridge Wells, Derby, Worcester, Babergh / Mid Suffolk, South Gloucestershire, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk and Cornwall have in recent years conducted a review of their committee structure guided by a Local Government Association publication entitled *Rethinking Governance*. By undertaking a review, Members of the Working Group will be given an opportunity to understand comparative arrangements at other Councils.
- 1.3 Governance works best when checks and balances are well-understood, and resources are aligned to achieving outcomes. Most importantly, Members should own and support their Committee structure.

Overview and Scrutiny

- 1.4 The Government has said that it will publish its updated national guidance for the Overview and Scrutiny function in December 2018. The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) provides a self-evaluation 'toolkit', which the Working Group can complete to evaluate the effectiveness of the function and to propose how best to enact the forthcoming guidance through the Committee structure at the Council.

Terms of Reference

- 1.5 The Working Group will develop its own terms of reference at its first meeting. Due to the necessity to conclude the review in time for the February meeting of Council, the scope should be limited to:
 - a) The current Committee structure at the Council, including the number, scope and membership of Committees
 - b) The Overview and Scrutiny function

Membership of the Working Group

- 1.6 Article 8 of the Constitution of the Council provides that the Deputy Leader of the Council has overall responsibility for Governance and Democratic Services. In order to achieve a representative membership and the engagement of political groups on the Council, the following membership of the Working Group is proposed.

The Deputy Leader (Cabinet Member with responsibility for Governance)	Councillor Kelham Cooke
Five Committee Chairmen	Five Chairmen from the Council's Committees as nominated at Council on 22 November 2018
Leader of the Labour Group	Councillor Phil Dilks
Leader of the Independent Group	Councillor Paul Wood
Leader of the SK Independent Group	Councillor Nick Craft

2. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To not conduct a review prior to Annual Council in May 2019. This is not a preferred option because certainty of, and support for, the Committee structure is required.
- 2.2 An Overview and Scrutiny self-evaluation could be undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Members only, using the self-evaluation toolkit. This is not a preferred option as a Working Group established by Council allows for a broader membership and wider consideration of other Committees of the Council

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The review will be supported using existing officer resources. Meetings of the group, including any visits to other Councils will be supported in accordance with the scheme of Members Allowances.

4. RISK AND MITIGATION

- 4.1 Corporate Risk Theme 4 *'Building a suitable level of capacity, skills and Culture within the Council workforce'* is defined as the *'Council being unable to successfully achieve the level of change expected and required by the Council leaders and stakeholders. In creating the change will come a new culture and outlook that is described as "agile" and "outcome focussed" i.e. we do what we say we will.'*
- 4.2 Key to 4.1 above is that *'Member/officer mind sets are aligned regards the change initiatives enabling the appropriate cultural change'* and one of the mitigating actions is to *'Launch and embed the Corporate Strategy to drive cultural change...'*
- 4.3 Embedding the cultural change desired by the Corporate Strategy calls for a timely review of the Committee structure in preparation for the new Council from May 2019.

4.4 The purpose of the review is intended to mitigate the risk relating to cultural change

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS (EQUALITY, SAFEGUARDING etc.)

5.1 There are no equality or safeguarding issues arising from the establishment of a Working Group to undertake a review of the Council's Committee structure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny function must discharge the functions of Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

7. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

7.1 The review can be completed within an existing budget.

8. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

8.1 South Kesteven District Council has agreed a Constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that those are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of those processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose. The Council must act within the law and use its resources wisely.

8.2 The establishment of a Working Group by Full Council, with no conferment of delegated powers is acceptable local authority practice. The Working Group will report its findings and make recommendations to Full Council for consideration.

9. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

9.1 There are none.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 There are none.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 *Rethinking Governance* (Local Government Association & the Centre for Public Scrutiny 2013)

<http://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Rethinking-Governance.pdf>

11.2 *The scrutiny evaluation framework - A mechanism for reviewing, evaluating and improving local government scrutiny and governance arrangements* (Centre for Public Scrutiny 2017)

<https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CfPS-Scrutiny-Evaluation-v2-SINGLE-PAGES.pdf>

11.3 Government Response to the Communities and Local Government Committee
First Report of Session 2017-19 on the Effectiveness of Local Authority
Overview and Scrutiny Committees - March 2018

<https://bit.ly/2DeliFe>