

Meeting:	Place Scrutiny Committee People Scrutiny Committee Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Date:	10 th , 11 th and 12 th July 2023
Classification:	Part 1
Key Decision:	No
Title of Report:	Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group
Report Author:	S Cox (Principal Democratic Services Officer)
Executive Director	Joe Chesterton (Executive Director – Finance and Resources)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Scrutiny Chairs Forum met on 27 June 2023. The Membership of this forum is constituted from the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each of the Council's three scrutiny committees.
- 1.2. At this meeting the membership and representation on Outside Bodies was identified as a potential topic for review, subject to agreement by Scrutiny Committees.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny members with an overview of the current situation and put forward options for moving this agenda forward.
- 2.2 The primary purpose of a Task and Finish Group is to either review existing and/or develop new Policy/Strategy. Task and Finish Group recommendations are, in the first instance, considered by the Overview and Scrutiny function before them being presented to either the Executive or Full Council for approval.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group be established:

- **in the proportion 4 Conservative, 3 Labour, 1 liberal Democrat, 1 Independent and 1 Residents First with appointments being made to ensure some representation from each of the scrutiny committees.**
- **It is suggested that the Group Leaders submit their nomination(s) to the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) in line with the proportionality allocations.**

3.2 That the Terms of Reference (attached at Appendix 1) be agreed.

3.3 Each of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive a progress update accordingly, before a final report is referred to Full Council.

4. Background

4.1 It has been recognised by Elected Members that when appointed to some Outside Bodies at Appointments Council, they have not received any meeting invitations or contact from the Outside Body. This may be because the information held is out of date (the Outside Body is defunct, and representation is not required) or our links with some Outside Bodies are not strong enough (highlighting the need to improve our communication and engagement with the Outside Body itself).

4.2 The Council has a strong commitment to partnership working with many bodies and this work takes many forms, the Council may give financial or other support to an organisation, or it may commission services, or it may be a partnership based on a dialogue and consultation.

4.3 Outside Body representation serves many purposes, including the following:

- Enable the Council to contribute to, and influence, the decision making of an organisation.
- Enable the organisation to have direct information about Council policy and practice.
- Provide, through particular appointees, a local perspective.
- Satisfy a legal requirement for the Council to serve on the body.
- Provide an essential lead focus on behalf of the Council.
- Facilitate the objectives of the Council.

4.4 A review of Outside Bodies and Member representation has not taken place for some time. It was felt by the Scrutiny Chairs Forum that a review of the current processes, procedures and representation would be timely and help to strengthen our partnership working going forward.

5. Purpose of the Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group Review

5.1 The purpose of this Group is to review all outside bodies on which members sit, and to look at improving the method for reporting back on Outside Bodies to ensure that they all are adding value to Southend-on-Sea City Council.

5.2 Aims

- To identify which appointments, continue to be beneficial.
- To identify which appointments may no longer be required, for example if the Outside Body is now defunct and no longer functioning.

- To identify any Outside Bodies which may need a different number of representatives.
- To identify any new bodies which may benefit from Member representation.
- To improve contact and relationships with Outside Bodies to and strengthen internal processes, for example how Outside Bodies will be notified when new appointments are made.
- To deepen understanding of the work of each Outside Body and the capacity in which they would like Members appointed, for example a decision-making capacity (member of management committee, board of directors, committee of trustee) or in an 'observer' capacity undertaking a monitoring role.
- To investigate ways by which all appointed Members can provide regular feedback to the Council on the work of their Outside Bodies.

5.3 The proposed Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

5.4 **Out of Scope**

The following are out of the scope of this proposed review:

- The appointments process for Outside Bodies (as this is dealt with by Group Leaders at Appointments Council).
- The suitability of those Members who have been appointed to represent the Council on the list of the Outside Bodies. (This is for determination by Group Leaders and in consultation with Members themselves).

6. **Governance**

6.1 By convention, political proportionality applies to working parties/groups and in accordance with this principle, it is proposed that a working group of 10 councillors is established in the proportion 4 Conservative, 3 Labour, 1 liberal Democrat, 1 Independent and 1 Residents First with appointments being made to ensure some representation from each of the scrutiny committees. It is suggested that the Group Leaders submit their nomination(s) to the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) in line with the proportionality allocations.

6.2 It is proposed that the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, in accordance with above, be selected from one of the nominated representatives of the Policy and Resources Committee (as the parent Committee). Although it is recognised the group will be cross-scrutiny.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are costs associated with organising Task and Finish Groups relating to officer time, but this will all be contained within existing resources.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 N/A

9. Carbon Impact

9.1. N/A

10. Equalities

10.1 N/A

11. Consultation

11.1 As described in the report.

12. Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Terms of Reference for the Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group