

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Corporate Director for Corporate Services

to

Chairmen's Scrutiny Forum

20th January 2014

Report prepared by:
Fiona Abbott

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New Scrutiny Committees - review

A Part 1 Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

Review of the new Scrutiny Committees.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1 In January 2013, the Council endorsed revisions to the Scrutiny Committees, to take effect in the 2013 / 14 Municipal Year. Following discussion at the Chairmen's Scrutiny Forum in February 2013 and subsequent agreement by the 3 Scrutiny Committees at their meetings held on 8th, 9th and 11th April 2013, it was agreed that the Economic & Environmental, Children and Lifelong Learning and Community Services and Culture Scrutiny Committees would be re designated as – Place, People and Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committees.

The terms of reference for the 3 Scrutiny Committees are attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.2 It was also agreed that the changes to the Scrutiny Committees should be reviewed after 9 months to enable any amendments to be made for the 2014 / 2015 Municipal Year.

3.3 This report looks at the operation of the new Scrutiny Committees so far.

4. New Scrutiny Committees

4.1 We have undertaken an analysis of the work of the new Scrutiny Committees so far during this Municipal Year. There have been 3 ordinary / scheduled meetings so far, on the following dates:

Place - 8th July, 7th October and 25th November 2013;
People - 9th July, 8th October and 26th November 2013; and
Policy & Resources - 11th July, 10th October and 28th November 2013.

4.2 Additional Scrutiny Committee meetings have also taken place, as follows - People Scrutiny Cttee on 2nd September and 22nd October 2013; and Place Scrutiny Cttee on 16th October 2013.

4.3 An analysis of the meetings has been carried out and this information is attached at **Appendix 2**. From the data, the average length of time for each ordinary Scrutiny Committee meeting is -

- Place – 3 hours 30 mins
- People – 3 hours 10 mins
- Policy & Resources – 2hrs 20 mins

The additional Place meeting lasted 2hrs 40 mins and the 2 additional People Scrutiny Committees each lasted 3hrs 15 mins.

4.4 At the meeting in February 2013, the Forum expressed concern around the workload of the People Scrutiny Cttee and also cross cutting issues such as crime & disorder matters. These issues have both been helped by Cllr Woodley's excellent idea to have separate member briefings / presentations and this issue is explored elsewhere on the agenda for today's meeting. On occasions of course, there will still be a need to have briefings at a Scrutiny Committee meeting.

4.5 The names of the 3 Scrutiny Committees does not seem to be an issue, the workloads of the Committees are fairly even and the distribution seems to be working well.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Contribution to Council's Vision and Critical Priorities – Becoming an excellent and high performing organisation.

5.2 Financial Implications – none.

5.3 Legal Implications – none.

5.4 People Implications – none.

5.5 Property Implications – none.

5.6 Consultation – as described in report.

5.7 Equalities Impact Assessment – none.

5.8 Risk Assessment – none.

6. Background Papers

None

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – terms of reference of 3 scrutiny committees

Appendix 2 – analysis of 3 scrutiny committees