

COUNCIL
19 MAY 2022

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements

Recommendations

1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the Council:

- (a) considers whether to revise its Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements having regard to this report; and if so**
- (b) agrees the number and size of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board and Panels and proposed allocation of seats between the political Groups on those bodies, other committees and on Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority as set out in Appendix 1;**
- (c) appoints the individual members to those committees in accordance with the nominations from time to time of the respective political Groups in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and requires the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance to give effect to such wishes expressed by the political Groups;**
- (d) authorises the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance to settle any outstanding details relating to the political structures and to make changes as necessary to the Council's Constitution (Articles and Appendices) to give effect to the Council's decisions and any other revisions necessary to reflect needs or circumstances.**

2. The Council is responsible for establishing the political structures and establishing such Committees as it thinks fit to carry out the discharge of functions which are not the responsibility of the executive (Leader and Cabinet). Council also appoints and determines the size of Committees/Panels and allocates the seats on them between political Groups in accordance with the rules on political balance. Council also appoints the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those bodies.

3. The Council's Corporate Plan is due to be approved on this Council agenda and this will confirm the Council's priorities. As the Council reaches the end of the first year of its current term and following consultation with the Leader and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board it is suggested that it is an opportune time to review arrangements for the Overview and Scrutiny function.

4. The Council's current model is an overarching co-ordinating Board, supported by Panels to consider specific areas of the Council's activity. The Council has previously agreed that the power to scrutinise health will be carried out by a specific Committee, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this is not proposed for change.

5. Looking across the workload of the scrutiny Panels, it has been suggested that the responsibilities covered by the Economy and Environment Panel are too broad to enable appropriate levels of support for, and scrutiny of, the key Council priorities in the Corporate Plan (Economy and the Environment). It is therefore proposed that the two elements are split, and a new Panel is created, one would cover the Economy, including strategic infrastructure, and the other the Environment. Their remits would be as follows:

Economy Panel

- Economy
- Workforce skills
- Strategic Infrastructure
- Broadband and communications

Environment Panel

- Environment including Net Zero plans
- Highways
- Flooding
- Waste

6. Recent reports into governance failings at local authorities have highlighted the importance of a robust scrutiny function. The proposal to create a new Panel will enable appropriate scrutiny focus to be given to these specific Council priorities.

7. If Council agrees to this change, the scrutiny Panels would be:

- Adult Care and Wellbeing
- Children and Families
- Corporate and Communities
- Economy
- Environment
- Health Overview and Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board will be made up of the chairmen of each of the above Panels, the Lead member for Community Safety, the Vice-Chairman, and the Chairman.

8. The addition of an extra Panel requires the Council to review the political balance of its Committees. A suggested allocation of seats to meet the requirement for political balance is attached at Appendix. The only proposed changes are for the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

9. The Chairman of the additional Panel will be entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance for the role in accordance with the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

(b) Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Member Bodies

Recommendation

10. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the Council appoints Members to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman roles in accordance with Appendix 2.

11. The Council needs to make the appointments to various chairmanships and vice-chairmanships of member bodies and of Lead Scrutiny Members. The nominations for a number of appointments are set out in Appendix 2 to this report, which will be circulated separately to the agenda.

(c) Council meeting dates 2023 - 24

Recommendation

12. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the Council approves its meetings for 2023 and early 2024 as follows:

2023

**12 January
16 February
18 May
13 July
14 September
9 November**

2024

**11 January
15 February
16 May**

13. County Council meeting dates are currently scheduled up to November 2022. To enable the 2023 meetings programme to be produced and help members plan their commitments, the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance suggests that further meetings of the Council are now scheduled for 2023 and through until the end of the next Municipal Year in 2024. In accordance with the usual practice and pattern of meetings, further meetings (Cabinet, Committees and Panels) will be arranged in the light of the Council dates and members notified in due course.

14. Members may wish to note that the remaining Council meetings this year are scheduled for 14 July, 8 September and 10 November 2022.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Supporting information

Appendix 1 – Proposed political balance

Appendix 2 – nominations for Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees and Panels
(to follow)

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report: