

REPORT TO: EXECUTIVE
Date of Meeting: Executive – 9 December 2014
Council 16 December 2014
Report of: Corporate Manager, Democratic Services and Civic Support
Title: Scrutiny Review Working Group Report

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

- The trial changes to the Scrutiny Agendas and meetings during the September and November 2014 cycle of Scrutiny.
- The findings of the cross party Scrutiny Review Working Group in respect of the success of these trial changes.
- Comments received from other Members and officers in respect of the trial changes.

2. Recommendations:

- That the Executive are provided with the opportunity to comment upon the trial changes to the Scrutiny Agendas and meetings.
- That the Executive acknowledge and note the findings of the Scrutiny Review Working Group together with other Member/Officer comments.
- That the Executive recommend to Council that the trial changes be made permanent with immediate effect.
- To review the operation of this permanent arrangement in 12 months' time.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- To ensure that Members remain fully informed of developments to the Scrutiny Function.
- So that Members are aware of the success of the trial changes and comments received from Members and Officers.
- To establish that there is no need to revise the changes following the September and November cycle of Scrutiny.
- To approve these recommendations to ensure the continued smooth and effective running of the Scrutiny Function at Exeter City Council.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources:

None.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

This report raises no issues for the Section 151 officer to consider.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None.

7. Monitoring officer Comments

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring officer to consider.

8. Report Details:

The Scrutiny Review Working Group reviewed the trial changes to the Scrutiny Agendas and meetings which were implemented during the September and November cycle of Scrutiny.

The trial changes consisted of:-

a) **Officers will not present their reports at the Committee meeting**

....unless requested by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Scrutiny Chairs or the officers involved who think it is necessary to present the report to the Committee.

b) **Members should pre-notify officers of expected questions on the reports**

....particularly if the questions are of a complex nature and require further research by the officer concerned before an answer can be given to the Committee. **This will not preclude or restrict Members from asking supplementary questions at the Committee meeting.**

c) **Some aspects of the Agenda will be dealt with as “items for information only”**

....and accompanied by a link which will appear on the Agenda. Such items would, for example, include changes or amendments to policy.

d) **Guest presentations will still appear under “items for discussion” on the Agenda**

e) **Altering business on the Agenda**

....if the Scrutiny Chairs alter the business on the Agenda they will notify Members of changes at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

a) **Portfolio Holders' Reports**

....for clarity the Portfolio Holders' reports would continue to be presented to Scrutiny Committees and appear as an Agenda item for the relevant Committee meeting.

Generally the trial changes were met with a positive response from both Members and Officers some of whom commented as follows:-

- The changes added to the smooth running of the meetings.

- Pre-notification of questions allowed for more detailed and full replies at the Committee meeting.
- The changes made a big improvement to the actual meetings.
- The meetings were more “business like”.
- The changes “worked well”.

9 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, Economy safety and the environment?

Not applicable.

John Street : Corporate Manager, Democratic Services and Civic Support

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Contact for enquiries: John Street, Corporate Manager, Democratic Services and Civic Support

Room 2.2, (01392) 265106