

Divisions Affected - All

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

– 18 JANUARY 2023

COUNCIL MOTION: EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report by Director of Law and Governance

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Audit and Governance Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - AGREE to consider the question of whether the Education Scrutiny Committee should be re-established as part of its review of the Council's scrutiny function in any governance review.

Executive Summary

2. This report seeks to provide formal adoption by the Audit and Governance Committee of the Council's direction that it should consider the question of whether the Education Scrutiny Committee should be re-established as part of its review of the Council's scrutiny function in any governance review.

Background

3. On 01 November 2022 the Council passed a motion to undertake a review of the Council's governance, specifically in relation to whether it would be preferable for the Council to maintain a Cabinet structure or to revert to a committee structure. This work falls most appropriately under the remit of Audit and Governance and is being taken forward through this channel.

4. At its meeting on 13 December 2022 Council considered a further motion:

"This Council welcomes the changes to its scrutiny function generally and the creation of dedicated People, Place and Performance & Corporate Services committees offering more targeted scrutiny of specific workstreams.

Notwithstanding the successes of the People committee in providing effective scrutiny of the very significant challenges facing Adult Social Care and Children's Services, Education and Schools issues have, at times, appeared to be marginalised.

Accordingly, Council resolves to ask Audit & Governance to consider the question of whether the Education Scrutiny Committee should be re-established as part of its review of the Council's scrutiny function in any governance review so as to ensure that Education policy issues can be more fully addressed by members on a deliberative and cross-party basis."

5. The motion was passed by Council, meaning that the decision has been made. The Committee is being asked formally to consider the question raised in the Council motion.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

6. The recommendation to review the case for whether to re-establish an Education Scrutiny Committee supports two of the Council's key policies. Firstly, there is clear relevance to 'Play our part in a vibrant local democracy' in asking whether the shape of the Scrutiny function is optimal. And secondly, as a governance function, Scrutiny upholds standards within its areas of focus. Deciding on the right level of scrutiny of education ensures that the Council is held to account for its performance over creating 'opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.'

Financial Implications

7. The financial implications of including the question of whether to re-establish an Education Scrutiny Committee as part of the Council's wider governance review are negligible and can be met from existing budgets. Consideration of the financial implications of re-establishing an Education Scrutiny Committee is to be undertaken during the governance review.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance,
lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

8. There are no specific legal implications to including whether to re-establish an Education Scrutiny Committee as part of the remit of the Council's wider governance review. Any legal considerations relating to re-establishing an Education Scrutiny Committee will be undertaken during the governance review.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer,
paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

Risk Management

9. There are negligible risks or opportunities in including whether to re-establish an Education Scrutiny Committee as part of the remit of the Council's wider governance review. Consideration of the substantive risks and opportunities relating to the establishment of the potential new Committee will be undertaken during the review.

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance

Contact Officer: Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer
07791494285
tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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