

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee –

Extract from the unapproved minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2012

27. FUTURE SCRUTINY STRUCTURE

Members considered a report which set out proposals for a new scrutiny structure from May 2013 following the County Council election. The chairman noted that the structure attached to the report built on the success of the Council's current arrangements whilst taking account of:

- a) The new operating model that splits commissioning from the delivery of services.
- b) The reduction in the number of councillors from 63 to 53 in May 2013.
- c) The introduction of the Police and Crime Panel.
- d) Reducing staff resources in Democratic Services and across the Council.

He suggested that, linked to the proposals, consideration be given to reducing the frequency of meetings. He believed that this principle could be extended to full Council with a reduced number of full Council meetings each year.

The vice-chairman stated that the call-in process built walls between members and did not help the scrutiny process. He suggested that consideration be given to setting up a separate committee to consider call-ins and petitions.

A member said that full Council was the arena for political debate on key issues. Debate should not be curtailed and meetings should take as long as needed for members to have their say. He believed that there was a case for more rather than less full Council meetings.

Another member believed that it was important that members were given the opportunity to debate the big issues and she felt that this was lacking at present.

The scrutiny structure attached to the report was supported and it was agreed that it should be referred to the Constitution Committee. The Constitution Committee should also be asked to consider wider issues relating to the frequency of meetings.

Action – *Simon Harper*