

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting13th March 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Proposed Revision to Select Committee Structure and Terms of Reference

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report relating to a proposed revision to the select committee structure and terms of reference.

It was explained that as part of its discussions at its recent Away Day, the Executive Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to a number of Scrutiny Structure and Constitutional issues arising from its review of scrutiny activities over the past year; with a view to considering whether any improvements could be introduced into scrutiny arrangements for the future. Reference was made at the meeting to the existing terms of reference of the Executive Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees, as set out in Article 6 of the Council's Constitution. Members were provided with a copy of the terms of reference.

Cabinet were informed that the Committee had noted the inability of the Adult Services and Health Select Committee in being able to fulfil its responsibilities for the scrutiny of Adult Services as a result of its workload being taken up entirely in scrutinising local health issues and the health service. It was therefore felt that given the likely development of this workload in accordance with regulations under Section 7 of the Health & Social Care Act 2001 and Section 31 of the Health Act 1999, there was no alternative other than to request Council to consider amending the Constitution to allow scrutiny responsibility for Adult Services to be removed from the Adult Services & Health Select Committee and transferred to the remit of the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee. It was explained that the broad remit of this Committee; together with its emphasis towards social inclusion, offered itself to be the most appropriate Committee for assuming this responsibility.

In addition, the Executive Scrutiny Committee also considered its responsibilities to prioritise, develop and co-ordinate the scrutiny work programme, ensuring that there was efficient use of the Select

Committees' time, whilst being mindful of the emerging corporate priorities. The Committee had suggested that there was a need to introduce greater flexibility to allow Select Committees to respond to Council priorities where required, by extending their remits beyond their own thematic area so as to be in a position to be able to consider requests from the Executive Scrutiny Committee to carry out a scrutiny review of 'any other matter considered to be appropriate that reflects the corporate priorities'. It was noted that this was considered especially important given the potentially increasing workload of Select Committees arising from new legislative requirements and referrals. A more flexible approach would help to create capacity within the work programme.

Members were provided with a document that highlighted the effects of both of the proposals together with the inclusion of responsibility for the Housing & Community Safety Committee in connection with the discharge of their crime and disorder functions under the Police and Justice Act 2006 approved by Council on 5th March 2008 (Cabinet-14th February 2008-Min 138 refers).

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. Scrutiny responsibility for Adult Services be removed from the Adult Services & Health Select Committee and transferred to the remit of the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee, and Article 6 of the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.

2. The proposed extension of the remit of the Select Committees identified at Appendix 2 be approved and Article 6 of the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.

3. Reasons for the Decision

As part of the Executive Scrutiny Committee's responsibility for the prioritisation, co-ordination and monitoring of scrutiny work programmes and activities, it is proposed that responsibility for the scrutiny of Adult Services be removed from the remit of the existing Adult Services & Health Select Committee to allow that Committee to concentrate solely on its responsibilities for review and scrutiny of local health issues and the health service. This follows an increasing workload for the Committee in this regard, with a resultant lack of capacity to be able to carry out any scrutiny of Adult Services.

In addition, in recognition of the need to introduce greater flexibility to allow Select Committees to respond to Council priorities, it is proposed that their existing remits be extended, as indicated, to allow their consideration of other matters considered appropriate by the Executive

Scrutiny Committee.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not Applicable

Proper Officer
17 March 2008