

Establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Grants Sub-Committee

The Committee noted that following a Best Value Inspection undertaken by Price Waterhouse Coopers during 2014, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued the Council with Directions on 17th December 2014. The Directions focused on particular areas which had been the subject of the Best Value inspection and included grants.

As part of the Directions, it was noted that a Grants Action Plan had been developed and agreed. As part of that Plan, a recommendation was to review arrangements post Commissioners for future executive decision-making and the action arising was to establish a cross party working group to develop proposals for future arrangements. A proposal was put to the Commissioners at their Decision Making Meeting on 1st March 2016 that a Sub-Committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should act as the “**cross-party forum**” to be established to review Officer recommendations prior to their consideration at a Commissioners’ Decision Making Meeting and this proposal was agreed. The Commissioners agreed to receive a further report setting out the details of the Committee arrangements.

A summary of the discussions on this report is set out below:

- Agreed that any decision relating to the composition of the Sub-Committee should be made independently of any political bias;
- The exact number needed to be settled and the Sub-Committee should also include in its membership co-opted non-voting members;
- Agreed that training would be required to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Elected and Co-opted Members; and
- Agreed Nominees should be sought from the Leaders of the 3 political groups for members of this Sub-Committee.

As a result of the discussions on this report including the appenices relating to Terms of Reference and the Forward Plan the Committee:

1. **Agreed** to add to the Overview and Scrutiny work programme, the review of Officer recommendations regarding grants and award of grants prior to their consideration at a Commissioners’ Decision Making Meeting;
2. **Agreed** to the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Grants Sub-Committee which will act as a scrutiny panel to undertake the reviews in recommendation 1 above;
3. **Considered** and **agreed** the terms of reference; forward plan; chairing arrangements; and training programme for such Sub-Committee as set out in Appendix A and B of the report;
4. **Considered** and **concluded** that the composition of the Sub-Committee should be settled on five elected members, namely the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (or his/ her nominated Deputy) and two other Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee from the administration and one each from the opposition parties with the addition of co-opted non-voting members, the exact number to be agreed; and
5. **Agreed** that a report would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 3 months to review the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Grants Sub-Committee and whether changes need to be made to its Terms of Reference or composition.