

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 MAY 2024**

**STATUTORY SCRUTINY GUIDANCE**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR ROGER LEES BEM, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The Government has recently issued revised statutory guidance for scrutiny in local authorities. This report brings this guidance to the attention of members and gives assurance as to compliance with the requirements of the guidance.

**2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Effective scrutiny is critical to the operation of the Council and thus the delivery of the Council Plan.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	No new policy or change to current procedure is required and therefore there is no need for an EqIA.
	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	No	The report does not propose any changes to the handling of personal data by the Council.
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	No	Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	May 2024	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	There are no financial implications arising from this report.
LEGAL ISSUES	No	The guidance issued has statutory status and therefore should be followed. Current procedures are in accordance with the guidance.
STRATEGIC RISK	No	No direct link to a strategic risk.

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	No other impacts are foreseen.	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

- 3.1 On 22 April 2024 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published updated Statutory Guidance on overview and scrutiny for councils (Appendix 1). The statutory guidance was first published in May 2019 and has been updated to take account of deeper devolution and the creation of combined county authorities through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The guidance sets out policies and practices authorities should adopt, or consider adopting, when deciding how to carry out their overview and scrutiny functions.
- 3.2 The core principles of the guidance remain and the arrangements for scrutiny at South Staffordshire Council have been reviewed in light of the guidance. The arrangements are reflective of the guidance and no changes to current practices are proposed.
- 3.3 For example, the guidance makes reference to scrutiny having a clear focus with a work plan suggested to give clarity. As members will be aware, a work plan for the committee has been in place for a number of years and this is approved by the committee on an annual basis.
- 3.4 The guidance also makes reference to the culture of the council being key to effective scrutiny. At South Staffordshire Council the positive culture means that executive decisions, which may otherwise be subject to call-in, are voluntarily referred to committee to enable all members to input into the decision-making process, without waiting for a call-in to be made.
- 3.5 Regular reporting of the work of scrutiny to council is also mentioned. At each council meeting a report from each of the scrutiny committees is put before members. In addition, the Member Working Groups regularly report on progress and report final outcomes to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, ensuring good visibility of the work undertaken.
- 3.6 For clarity, the requirement in the guidance for an independent chair, only applies to combined authorities.

### **4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 4.1 N/A

**5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

5.1 N/A

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

DLUHC Statutory Scrutiny Guidance

**7. APPENDICES**

Statutory Scrutiny Guidance – Appendix 1 - DLUHC Statutory Scrutiny Guidance May 2024

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That Members note the Statutory Scrutiny Guidance and the Council's compliance with the requirements therein.

Report prepared by: Lorraine Fowkes – Corporate Director of Governance