

Briefing Note - Project Board Membership

- 1 The Management Committee has been approached on a couple of occasions recently to appoint a scrutiny member to (executive) project boards on reviews of Car Parking and Positive Leisure Time for Young People. The issue of what the role entails and the potential for conflict of interest has been raised for those that may be appointed in the future.
- 2 OS can be engaged in a number of different ways and at different times during the development or review of a policy or significant service change as follows:
 - Select Committee
 - Task Group
 - Rapid Scrutiny Exercise
 - Representation on Project Board
- 3 Ideally one of these approaches becomes the prominent form of engagement depending on the joint view taken with the Executive or partner organisation. This avoids the potential for confusion or duplication and is co-ordinated by the relevant select committee with endorsement by the Management Committee as each activity forms part of the single OS work programme.
- 4 In the past appointments to projects boards were commonplace as it provided OS with an opportunity to contribute and influence through “lay challenge” on a range of Council programmes and projects. They were particularly prevalent during transition to one council. It enabled OS to broaden its scope without over-stretching member capacity and officer resource. Once appointed the member attended project board meetings and reported back to the select committee at key milestones within the project. The member received support from the lead service officer, project officer and scrutiny officer. More recent examples are SAP, Housing Revenue and Benefits System, Wiltshire Online.
- 5 In respect of the two new requests, the difference being that OS had already established task groups for these activities at the invitation of the Executive. Ordinarily these task groups would be operating alongside the project boards with constructive challenge being offered at the key milestones. The request is now to also have a scrutiny member appointed to the respective project

boards. In these circumstances it is important to define the various responsibilities.

- 6 It should be seen as a positive step that OS has been invited to make these appointments at the heart of major policy development and review within the Council. In doing so the appointments should perhaps be made on the following basis:
- The scrutiny representative to fulfil the lay challenge role on the project board
 - To be non-voting and not bound by decisions of the board (in order to maintain transparency)
 - The member to take a strategic view (and not a locality interest)
 - Member to be appointed following an open expression of interest to all members as is the current convention
 - Ideally to be a member of any task group if also established for the review (in order to provide continuity)
 - To lead the reporting back at key milestones in the project to the select committee and/or task group as necessary (with appropriate officer support).
- 7 The way forward therefore might be that the Management Committee approves future appointments to project boards on the basis outlined above recognising that a case by case approach may be necessary to allow for individual circumstances.