

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

**Cabinet Member** Cllr Clive Eginton  
**Responsible Officer** Head of Communities & Governance (Monitoring Officer)

**Reason for Report:** To present Members with a report outlining potential changes to the to the Council Committee structure

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Standards Committee recommend to Council that:

1. A fourth Policy Development Group (PDG) is created so that the PDGs match the priorities set out in the new Corporate Plan – i.e. Economy, Homes, Community and Environment
2. The number of Members on the Planning Committee is reduced from 15 to 11 and that the number of substitutes is increased from 5 to 7
3. The number of Members on the Licensing and Licensing Regulatory Committees are reduced from 15 to 12
4. The changes come into effect from the start of the new municipal year

**Financial Implications:** The current cost of introducing a 4<sup>th</sup> PDG would mean a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of £3,484. However, reducing the amount of money spent on mileage if the numbers of Members on the Planning, Licensing and Licensing Regulatory Committees were reduced would mean that some of this cost would be offset

**Legal Implications:** The proposed changes are a matter of local choice for Full Council to decide upon and there is no legislation preventing the recommendations being approved

**Risk Assessment:** It is important to ensure that the Council is picking up and reviewing all of the priority areas within the Corporate Plan.

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the Standards Committee meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015, the Monitoring Officer was tasked with reviewing the Committee Structure with the view of creating a fourth Policy Development Group, in line with the new Corporate Plan.
- 1.2 A report was taken back to the last meeting of the Standards Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016, where discussion took place and the Monitoring Officer was then asked to research what other Councils do in terms of their arrangements.

1.3 The Monitoring Officer has researched what other District Councils in Devon, Somerset and Dorset have in place in terms of their Committee arrangements in terms of the policy development role and the numbers of Members on Planning and Licensing Committees.

1.4 This report incorporates this information and will now deal with each of the issues in turn. The information from the research is attached as Appendix A

## 2.0 Policy Development Roles

2.1 The Council seems to be the one of few Councils with specific Policy Development Groups as well as a Scrutiny Committee. However, many of the Councils have a number of task and finish groups or smaller committees which focus on specific areas and report back to the Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 Members were fully involved in the design of the Committee structure back in 2007 when the Executive arrangements came into place and PDGs were introduced. Members were also involved in the shaping of the new Corporate Plan and identifying the Council's corporate priorities. The Monitoring Officer has asked all Members for feedback on these proposed changes and will give verbal feedback at the meeting.

2.3 The proposed workload split for the PDGs was attached to the last agenda and is attached again as Appendix B

2.4 If Members are minded to support the proposal of the 4<sup>th</sup> PDG it is proposed that the numbers on some of our other Committees are reviewed to ensure that Members are not stretched too thinly across committees.

## 3.0 Planning Committee

3.1 It is proposed to reduce the number of members on the planning committee from 15 to 11.

3.2 The research into other District Councils showed that the number of Members on Planning Committees varied between 9 and 16.

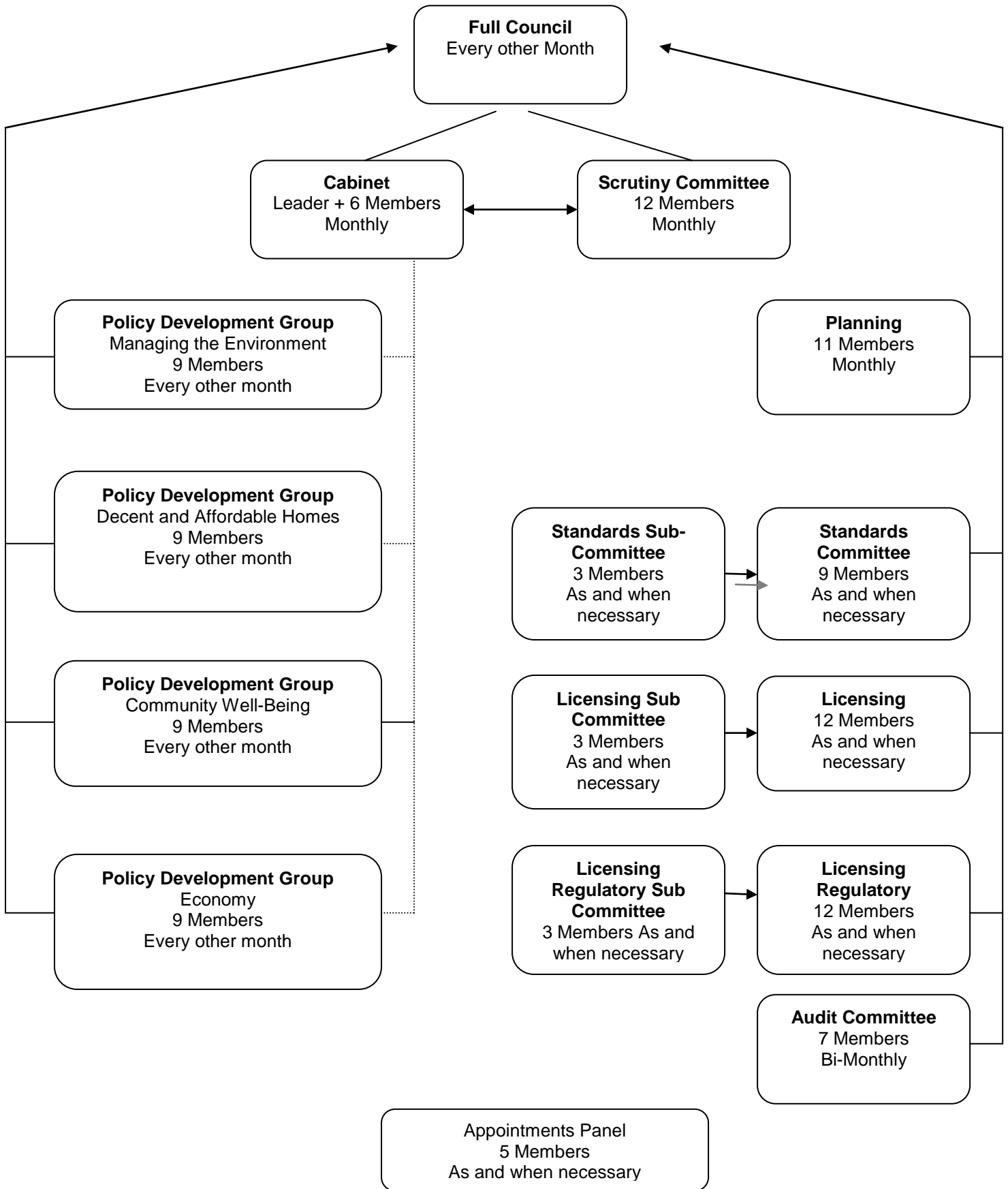
3.3 Therefore having 11 Members on the Planning Committee is recommended along with increasing the number of substitutes from 5 to 7.

## 4.0 Licensing and Licensing Regulatory Committee

4.1 It is proposed to reduce the number of members on the Licensing and Licensing Regulatory Committee from 15 to 12

4.2 The research into other District Councils showed that the number of Members on Licensing and Licensing Regulatory Committees varied between 10 and 15.

The proposed structure chart would be as follows:



**Contact for more Information:** Amy Tregellas, Head of Communities & Governance (Monitoring Officer) ext 4246

**Research from District Councils in Devon, Somerset and Dorset**

East Devon District Council

Overview Committee (11 Councillors)  
Scrutiny Committee (15 Councillors)  
Housing Review Board (5 Councillors)

Development Management Committee (16 Councillors)

Licensing and Enforcement Committee (15 Councillors)  
Licensing Sub-Committee (3 Councillors from above Committee)

The Chairman of the Council is also the Chairman of the Standards Committee

Exeter City Council

Three Scrutiny Committees:

- **Community (13 Councillors)**  
Deals with all community and environmental services including housing and environmental health. It reviews the budget and financial performance within these areas. It works with other agencies on issues such as social inclusion and community safety. It undertakes reviews of appropriate strategies and policies emanating from the work and functions of the community and environment services.
- **Economy (13 Councillors)**  
Evaluates performance of economic development, tourism, transportation, parking, estates, planning (except planning applications – see Planning Committee), markets and events, leisure development, museums, city development and sustainable development. It monitors effectiveness of the Council's partnerships with other agencies such as city centre manager and the wider future development of the city (Exeter Vision).
- **Resources (13 Councillors)**  
Monitors central and corporate services and the overall financial performance of the Council. It advises Executive on staffing issues including industrial relations, health and safety and equalities and ICT. At the request of the Council or Executive, it considers such papers or issues that are to be presented to the Executive in order that the views of the committee are available to the council or Executive in making its decision.

Planning Committee (13 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (14 Councillors)

North Devon District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (13 Councillors)  
There is one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a number of Scrutiny Sub-

Committees which support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. They allow a wider involvement in Council business by involving non-councillors from the wider public sector, voluntary and community groups to help them in their work. They may make reports and recommendations to the Executive and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

Planning Committee (16 Councillors)

Membership of the committee cannot include Executive Members

Licensing Committee (15 Councillors)

### South Hams District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (13 Councillors)

South Hams District Council aims to have a scrutiny function that adheres to the Centre for Public Scrutiny's four principles of good scrutiny:

- Provides critical challenge to executive policy makers and decision makers
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard
- Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role
- Drives improvement in public services

Reports and recommendations are put by this Panel to the Executive and the Council to advise on policy, budget and service delivery.

Policy Development and Review

In this role, Scrutiny Panels can review the Council's policies to assess whether the intended policy outcomes have been achieved and can also assist the Council during the early development of new policies and the formulation of key plans. Very often policy review can lead to recommendations to develop new policy. This work can be carried out by a Scrutiny Panel or a Panel may assign this task to a smaller number of Members in the form of a Task and Finish Group. Carefully choosing which topics to review can help the Council to focus on the issues that matter to local people most and derive real outcomes for them.

All councillors, except Members of the Executive and the Development Management Committee, are eligible to sit on the Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

Development Management Committee (12 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (12 Councillors)

### Teignbridge District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (30 Councillors)

The Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) Committee comprises 30 Councillors, none of whom are on the Executive. O&S appoints time limited Review Groups (made up of six Councillors – 2 from each political party) to carry out in-depth investigations within a specific time frame, normally three months.

Planning Committee (25 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (10 Councillors)

## Torridge District Council

Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee (12 Members – 9 Councillors and up to 3 non-elected representatives)

The Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee has the power to review the policies of the Council and its objectives, and is entitled to 'call in' decisions made by the Community & Resources Committee which are not yet implemented. They can also recommend that the Community & Resources Committee reconsider such a decision. Issues that remain unresolved will be referred to the Full Council for determination.

External Overview and Scrutiny Committee (12 Members – 9 Councillors and up to 3 non-elected representatives)

The External Overview & Scrutiny Committee has the same terms of reference as the Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee, but scrutinises the performance of external public sector bodies operating within Torridge.

Plans Committee (9 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (10 Councillors)

## West Devon Council

Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 Councillors)

To consider and scrutinise how the Council is performing as an organisation (e.g. internal policies and organisation strategies)

- Internal policy, and organisation strategies review & development
- Performance
- Complaints
- Discharging the duties of a Crime & Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Member learning & development
- RIPA – to review the Council's RIPA Policy and its use annually and to receive regular reports on its the use of RIPA

External Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 Councillors)

To consider and focus on the impact the Council and its partners are making on our customers and communities.

- Scrutiny of external organisations
- Crime & Disorder O&S functions
- Monitoring of service contracts
- Health & Wellbeing
- Community Safety

Sometimes joint internal and external Overview and Scrutiny Committee (22 Councillors)

Planning and Licensing Committee (10 Councillors)

## Mendip District Council

Scrutiny Board (9 Councillors)

The purpose of the Scrutiny Board is to report and make recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery. The Scrutiny Board has an important role in monitoring the decisions of the Council

Planning Board (15 Councillors and 7 substitutes)

Licensing Board (15 Councillors)

#### Sedgemoor District Council

Community Scrutiny Committee (11 Councillors)

This committee will focus on service delivery and community requirements, scrutinising and making recommendations to improve under performing council services and incorporating the external scrutiny role alongside major partners of the Council. This committee will also form close links with the Local Strategic Partnership and associated planning arrangements.

Corporate Scrutiny Committee (11 Councillors)

This committee's focus will be on strategic business and corporate processes including corporate planning, financial management and budget setting, performance management framework, risk management and relevant corporate policies such as human resources, e-government etc.

No Councillor may be on both Scrutiny Committees

Development Management Committee (15 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (15 Councillors)

#### South Somerset District Council

Scrutiny Committee (14 Councillors)

The Scrutiny Committee monitors and scrutinises our performance as a whole as well as individual services. It can also make recommendations for any issue we are responsible for and which affects the local community.

Regulatory Committee (14 Councillors)

Area Committees (East = 12 Councillors, North = 13 Councillors, South = 19 Councillors and West = 16 Councillors)

We have four Area Committees (North, South, East and West), which work closely with their local communities, allowing Planning and other issues to be decided at a local level. Area Committees form part of our ambitious and nationally acclaimed framework for Area Working. Area Committees take decisions in public on significant planning applications, invest in local projects, discuss issues of interest and priority to the local area, and enable residents to get involved in local decision-making.

Licensing Committee (15 Councillors)

#### Taunton Deane Borough Council

Community Scrutiny Committee (15 Councillors)

To examine the issues that impact on all segments of the community in respect of all services delivered by the Council and/or other public bodies or partnerships;

Corporate Scrutiny Committee (15 Councillors)

To examine the planning, performance and management of the Council's services in undertaking the key tasks to achieve the objectives of the Corporate Strategy priorities including monitoring compliance with budget, achievement of desired outcomes and customer satisfaction (where appropriate), best value and value for money reviews;

Have a number of task and finish groups in respect of Scrutiny Committee

Planning Committee (15 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (15 Councillors)

#### West Somerset District Council

Scrutiny Committee (9 Councillors)

The Committee scrutinise Performance Management; particular Key Decisions and other aspects of Cabinet activity; and review or scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas.

Planning Committee (15 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (11 Councillors)

#### Christchurch Borough Council

Scrutiny and Policy Review Committee (9 Councillors)

The scrutiny work of the Council is undertaken by the Scrutiny and Policy Review Committee. This supports the work of the two policy committees and the Council as a whole, and can review any matter which affects the district or its inhabitants.

Planning Control Committee (10 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (10 Councillors)

#### East Dorset District Council

Scrutiny and Policy Review Committee (11 Councillors)

The scrutiny work of the Council is undertaken by the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee. This supports the work of the two policy committees and the Council as a whole, and can review any matter which affects the district or its inhabitants.



Planning Committee (13 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (10 Councillors)

#### North Dorset District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (17 Councillors)

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for various review and scrutiny functions, monitoring the work of the Council to ensure that the needs of the community are understood and that decision making is open and transparent. The scrutiny function enables members to hold the cabinet and senior managers to account. It also enables members to review policy and its implementation and consider any matters which affect the community which the council represents. All members of the council who are not members of the cabinet are part of the council's scrutiny function. The role of scrutiny is to ensure that the needs of the community are understood and met and that proper decision making is undertaken. The council appoints a committee to undertake the management of the Overview and Scrutiny role, together with two review committees to undertake more detailed work in each of the main areas.

Also used to have a Policy Review Committee and Service Review Committee but these committees have not met since April 2013.

Development Management Committee (11 Councillors)

Licensing and Orders Committee (10 Councillors)

#### Purbeck District Council

Policy Group

The Policy Group makes recommendations to the Council on matters of importance to the District, the development of Council policy, the Council's functions, and its resources.

The Policy Group may appoint Policy Development Panels of between 3 and 7 councillors appointed by agreement between the political group leaders, and chaired by the Leader of the council or the relevant spokesperson, to assist the Policy Group in the development of policy. The scope of the work of each Policy Development Panel will be set by the Policy Group.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee no longer active

Planning Committee (11 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (11 Councillors)

#### West Dorset District Council

Efficiency Scrutiny Committee (12 Councillors)

The Efficiency Scrutiny Committee is responsible for undertaking cross-cutting scrutiny reviews of council services or of matters of relevance to the council and district.

Policy Scrutiny Committee (12 Councillors)

The role of the committee is to review and assist with the development of the council's key policies, strategies and plans and make recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Development Control Committee (12 Councillors)

Licensing and Appeals Committee (13 Councillors)

### Weymouth and Portland Borough Council

Scrutiny and Performance Committee (15 Councillors)

The Scrutiny and Performance Committee is responsible for undertaking scrutiny reviews of council services and of matters of relevance to the council and the borough.

Role of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee

The Scrutiny and Performance Committee aims to improve the services that you use by monitoring the work of the council and its partner organisations, such as the county council, health service and other agencies. It can do this by making recommendations to the Management Committee on the way services are provided. The committee has a work plan which is reviewed at every committee meeting.

Policy Development Committee (15 Councillors)

It assists in the development of all aspects of Council Policy which may include drafting new policies or reviewing existing policies. It can respond to requests by the Management Committee to do this work.

The Committee also assists in the development of the Council's budget and policy framework and is a consultee on the draft budget proposals. It can consider whether there are any policies that should be developed to assist future budget setting processes.

Key roles for members of this committee therefore include:-

- Reviewing policy and assisting in policy development
- Identifying gaps in policy or areas where a particular policy is not working
- Feeding community views into policy development

The Policy Development Committee has a workplan which it considers at each meeting. This lists all the known items that the Committee will be considering over the upcoming months.

Planning and Traffic Committee (12 Councillors)

Licensing Committee (12 Councillors)