



**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION:**

30 September 2020

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Moran

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**SUBJECT: OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FUNCTION – RESULTS OF THE
CONSULTATION**

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide the results of the consultation undertaken with Members in respect of the Overview & Scrutiny Function at West Lancashire Borough Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the results of the consultation set out in Appendix 1 to the report be considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Overview and scrutiny committees were introduced in 2000 as part of new executive governance arrangements to ensure that members of an authority who were not part of the executive could hold the executive to account for the decisions and actions that affect their communities. Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers to scrutinise decisions the executive is planning to take, those it plans to implement, and those that have already been taken/implemented. Recommendations following scrutiny enable improvements to be made to policies and how they are implemented.

3.2 Overview and scrutiny committees can also play a valuable role in developing policy. Effective overview and scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge;
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
- Drive improvement in public services.

- 3.3 Current overview and scrutiny legislation recognises that authorities are democratically-elected bodies who are best-placed to determine which overview and scrutiny arrangements best suit their own individual needs, which provides a degree of flexibility to decide which arrangements to adopt. The organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes of an authority will largely determine whether its scrutiny function succeeds or fails. While everyone in an authority can play a role in creating an environment conducive to effective scrutiny, it is important that this is led and owned by members, given their role in setting and maintaining the culture of an authority.
- 3.4 Under the Sustainable Organisation Review (SORP), the terms of reference of the Member Development Commission were extended to include: "In order to give effect to the augmented Member role proposed within the Sustainable Organisation Review, to examine how cross-party scrutiny and development of strategy could be strengthened via either existing or new committee arrangements, reporting to Executive Overview and Scrutiny and (then) to Council by April 2020. Such activity to include the option of engaging external specialist advice with relevant expenditure being contained within the budget provided." One aspect of this task, although delayed, was to look at current scrutiny arrangements and how it can be more strategic in its role.
- 3.5 In order to obtain the views of all Members the Member Development Commission agreed a number of questions, which were then circulated to Members in the form of an on-line questionnaire.

4.0 RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

- 4.1 The results of the questionnaire are attached at Appendix 1. 29 responses were received from members.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. Overview and Scrutiny arrangements can assist in involving the community in decisions which affect their lives.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant risk registers.

8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

1. Results of the Questionnaire.