

THE POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF A MULTIPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MODEL AND A SINGLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MODEL

Potential Advantages and Disadvantages identified in Multiple Overview And Scrutiny Committee model	
From Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Report: The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government – September 2002	
Potential Advantage	Potential Disadvantage
Allows more Members to be involved in Overview and Scrutiny	Gaps or overlaps between the Committees
Allows Members to develop specialisms	Difficulty in making sense of cross cutting briefs
Encourages Members to concentrate on key cross cutting issues	Multiple committees can strain officer support resources
Can help to spread the potential high workload of scrutiny	Can reinforce retention of committee culture
Can help in relating to cabinet remits if mirroring cabinet portfolios	Can produce claims of inconsistency of approach
Allows Committees to experiment with different approaches	

Other Potential Advantages and Disadvantages identified in Multiple Overview And Scrutiny Committee model prior to May 2011	
Potential Advantage	Potential Disadvantage
Wide coverage of Services	A temptation to search for business to fill agendas for scheduled meetings.

	<p>Lack of focus on outcomes</p> <p>More demands on Cabinet Member Time</p> <p>Additional pressure on Member Diaries.</p> <p>Additional pressure on the corporate diary</p> <p>More Demands on Officer Time</p>
Means of exchanging information and gaining knowledge of Service	<p>Formal Committee meeting is not best forum for an exchange of information to allow Councillors to gain general knowledge. (Lamb 2012)</p> <p>Tendency for the degree of separation between the multiple Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Directorates to reduce over time, leading to them becoming an advocate for the Directorate rather than a critical friend and a temptation for Directorates to exploit this and undermine corporate policies</p>
	<p>Formal Committee style meetings tend to lead to formal committee style approaches to how business is conducted (officer reports, minutes, requests to officers for more information. Monitoring etc (Lamb 2008 (p11)</p>
	<p>Additional expenditure on Members Allowances</p>
<p>Potential Advantages and Disadvantages identified in Single Overview And Scrutiny Committee model</p> <p>From Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Report: The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government – September 2002</p>	

Provides high degree of flexibility	Can limit the number of members involved in scrutiny
Avoids creating an overly bureaucratic system	Cuts down the potential for Members to develop specialisms
Easier (and perhaps cheaper) to provide officer support to	Can be difficult to undertake a high workload
Can produce a cohesive scrutiny team	
Other Potential Advantages and Disadvantages of single Overview and Scrutiny Committee model with Task and Finish Groups post May 2011	
“Task and Finish approach usually leads to research, interviewing of witnesses/specialists, focused discussion, deeper understanding, and with Members heavily involved in the production of the report .”(Lamb 2008 p11)	The wide remit of a single O&S Committee means that Members have to participate in consideration of issues in which they may not have a strong interest
<p>The emphasis on Task and Finish is in line with good practice and would enable Councillors to join a group working on a particular topic according to personal motivation, interest and perhaps prior or current expertise.”</p> <p>“It is more likely that the proposed structure will result in more satisfying roles for scrutiny councillors as the ‘task and finish’ group focuses on a topic and is able to get under the surface of issues and gain deeper and better understanding of the subject resulting in better and clearer recommendations to cabinet and other partner organisations.” Lamb 2012 p 7)</p>	The abolition of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee has created difficulties for statutory co-optees for educational matters (Diocesan Representatives and Parent Governor Representatives).

<p>Selective focus</p>	<p>Statutory responsibility for Health scrutiny has led to a high proportion of Health Scrutiny items.</p> <p>The recent Government consultation paper of local authority health scrutiny stated that the Government's aim was to strengthen and streamline health scrutiny, and enable it to be conducted effectively, as part of local government's wider responsibility in relation to health improvement and reducing health inequalities for their area and its inhabitants.</p> <p>Lamb 2012 p3 notes: The establishment of a health and social care scrutiny committee recognises the huge changes occurring in the sector and would be the natural place for the Council to delegate its statutory health powers.</p>
<p>Reduced expenditure on Members Allowances</p>	<p>The need to accommodate other business alongside health business has led to some lengthy agendas, the alternative being to hold additional meetings, a number of which have in any event had to be scheduled.</p>