



**Chester-le-Street**  
District Council

# The Future of Scrutiny

## Scrutiny Structure Options Report



**Draft July 2006**

## **1. Introduction**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> June a Member workshop was undertaken . This was arranged to assist the council in reaching a decision about the future role of Scrutiny at the District Council. Currently there are three Overview and Scrutiny Panels managed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The panels are based on pre 2005 council aims which no longer exist. Discussions have been held between members on the need to consider change. The review of Scrutiny is a proposal in the council's new Corporate Plan approved by Council on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

The Workshop aimed to share the experience form other Scrutiny Members and Officers in the region and as a result challenge the current arrangements. While there will be an element of learning this was not a members training event. It was part of the council's corporate planning process and will help facilitate a further review of the council's constitution and more effective scrutiny of the council's business. A report of that workshop has been produced and Circulated to all members.

## **2. Purpose of this document**

The Purpose of this document is set out in a little more detail the potential options available to members. Initially it has been designed to facilitate a discussion at an informal Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2006. It is intended that this meeting will develop the advantages and disadvantages of the options and aid OSMB to reach a consensus on what option they would prefer to support or which specific options they feel further work needs to be undertaken.

## **3. Report Structure**

The report is structured as follows:

**Part 1 : Option for 1 Scrutiny Panel**

**Part 2 : Options for 2 Scrutiny Panels**

**Part 3: Options for 3 Scrutiny Panels**

**Part 4: Options for 4 Scrutiny Panels**

Each option sets out a diagram and description and identifies potential advantages and disadvantages



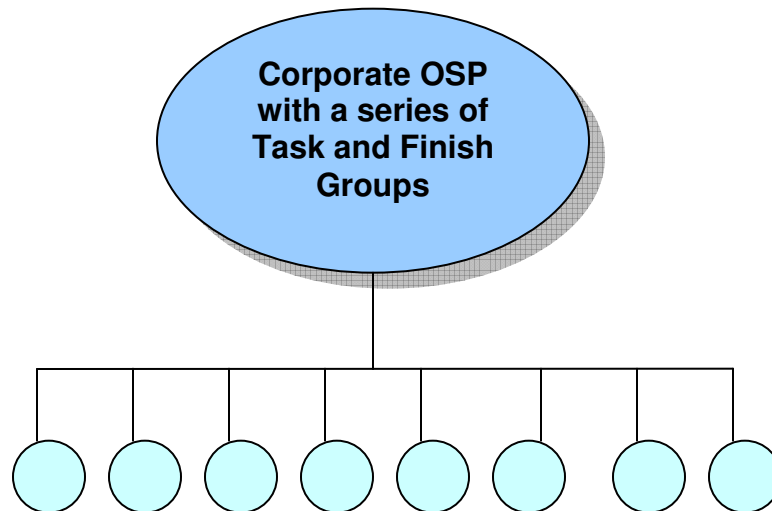
**Chester-le-Street**  
District Council

# The Future of Scrutiny

## Scrutiny Structure Options Report Part 1 : Option for One Scrutiny Panel



## Option 1 : One Scrutiny Panel



<b>Description</b>	
This option involves only one OSP. It would focus on all internal and external activity. It would engage task and finish groups to implement its agreed work programme. There would be no need for a separate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear focus on cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Focus on Sustainable Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and LAA</li> <li>▪ Members skills could be shared</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ Fewer meetings necessary</li> <li>▪ Easier to manage process</li> <li>▪ Could free more DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>▪ Better attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>▪ Community engagement in Task and Finish Groups</li> <li>▪ Reduction in admin costs</li> <li>▪ Avoids overly bureaucratic system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More difficult to manage Task and Finish groups</li> <li>▪ Longer formal meetings possible</li> <li>▪ Fewer chair and vice chair responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Is there sufficient capacity to engage all members</li> <li>▪ Many elected members kept at a distance from decision making process</li> <li>▪ Difficulty in undertaking a high workload</li> <li>▪ Too large to reach consensus</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / Conclusion</b>	
No clear consensus support for such an option from workshop	



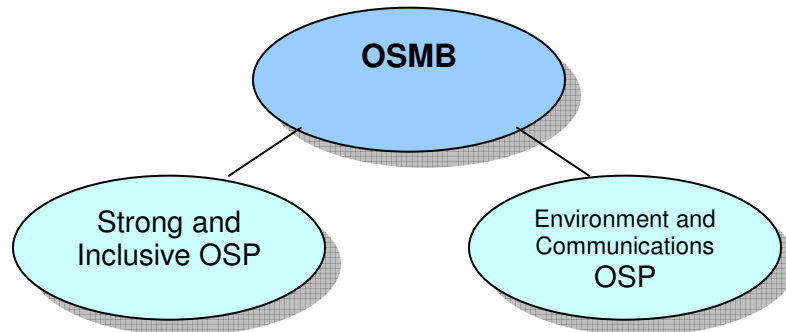
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# The Future of Scrutiny

## Scrutiny Structure Options Report Part 2 : Options for two Scrutiny Panels

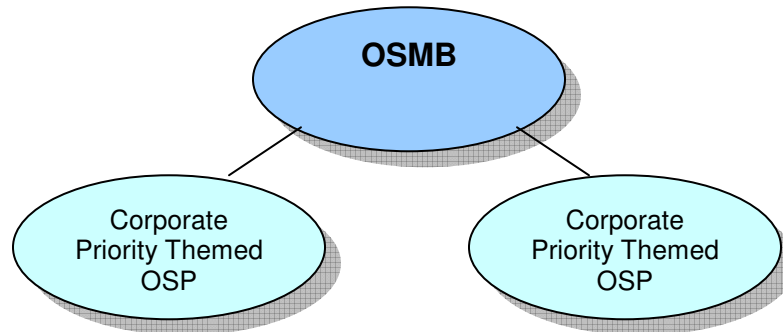


# Option 2 : Two Scrutiny Panels – Sustainable Community Strategy



<b>Description</b>	
<p>This would involve the development of two Panel managed by OSMB. The themes could be around the 4 Sustainable Community Strategy aims, each OSP Dealing with two of the SCS aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A strong, sustainable and diverse economic base</li> <li>▪ Inclusive communities</li> <li>▪ Excellent communication networks</li> <li>▪ An attractive and protected environment</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutiny clearly linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy and as a result corporate priorities and LAA</li> <li>▪ Improved Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members skills could be shared</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ Fewer meetings</li> <li>▪ Easier to manage process</li> <li>▪ Could free some DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>▪ Better attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>▪ Reduction in admin costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longer meetings possible</li> <li>▪ Fewer chair and vice chair responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Is there sufficient capacity to engage all members</li> <li>▪ Difficulty in undertaking a high workload – possible uneven workloads</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	

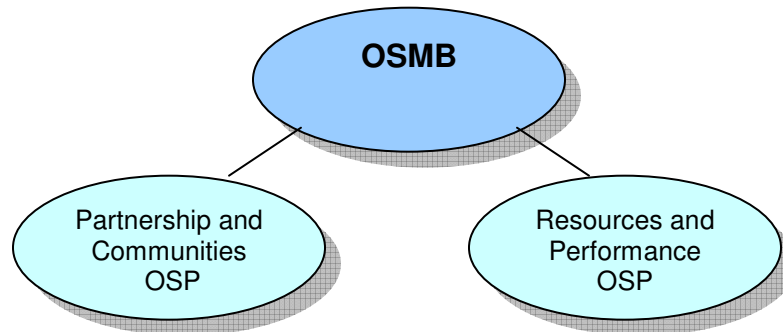
# Option 3 : Two Scrutiny Panels – Corporate Priority



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This would involve the development of two Panels managed by OSMB. The themes could be around the 7 corporate priorities, each OSP Dealing with three individual priorities of the corporate plan and both addressing the cross cutting nature of the first priority which is Customer Excellence.</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny clearly linked to corporate priority and as a result clearer focus on corporate activity and as a result the SCS and LAA</li> <li>Some Focus on cross cutting issues</li> <li>Members skills could be shared</li> <li>Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>Fewer meetings</li> <li>Easier to manage process</li> <li>Could free some DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>Better attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>Reduction in admin costs</li> <li>Fits council objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer meetings possible</li> <li>Fewer chair and vice chair responsibilities</li> <li>Is there sufficient capacity to engage all members</li> <li>Difficulty in undertaking a high workload – possible uneven workloads</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	



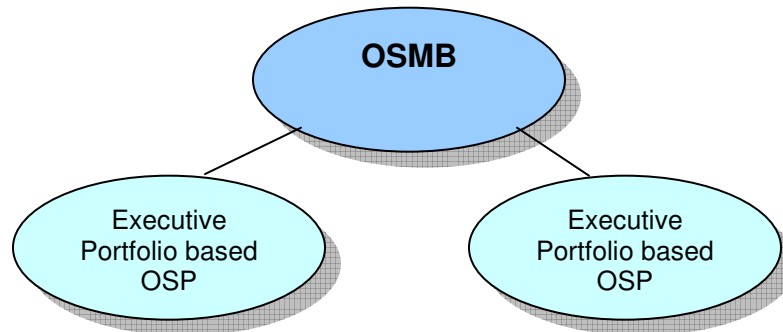
# Option 4 : Two Scrutiny Panels – Issue Based



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This would involve the development of two Panels managed by OSMB. The two panels could address key areas of corporate governance . For example one may deal with Partnerships and Communities while the other Resources, Performance and Risk .</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutiny linked to issues of corporate importance and as a result clearer focus on corporate activity</li> <li>▪ Clearer Focus on cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members skills could be shared</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ Fewer meetings</li> <li>▪ Easier to manage process</li> <li>▪ Could free some DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>▪ Better attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>▪ Reduction in admin costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No clear focus towards SCS or Corporate Priorities</li> <li>▪ Longer meetings possible</li> <li>▪ Fewer chair and vice chair responsibilities</li> <li>▪ No firm link to community issues of importance</li> <li>▪ Is there sufficient capacity to engage all members</li> <li>▪ Difficulty in undertaking a high workload – possible uneven workloads</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	

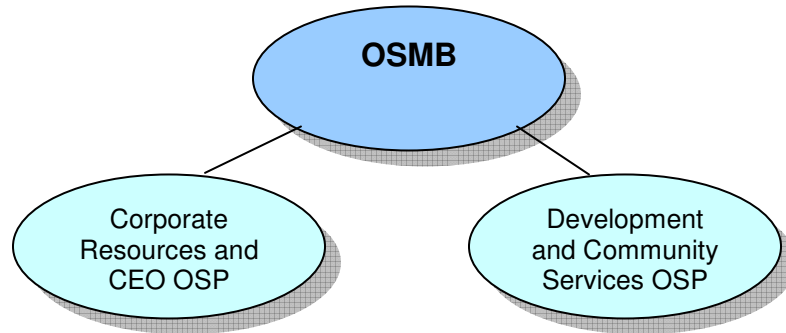


# Option 5 : Two Scrutiny Panels – Portfolio Holder based



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This would involve the development of two Panels managed by OSMB. The panel could address issues around the responsibilities of the Executive for example:           <p style="margin-left: 40px;">One panel could address Equalities, Human Resources, Communications and Performance while the other Finance, Housing Leisure and the Environment</p> </li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutiny clearly linked to issues of corporate priority and as a result clearer focus on corporate activity</li> <li>▪ Improved working between Executive and Scrutiny possible</li> <li>▪ Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members skills could be shared</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ Fewer meetings</li> <li>▪ Easier to manage process</li> <li>▪ Could free some DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>▪ Better attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>▪ Reduction in admin costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longer meetings possible</li> <li>▪ Fewer chair and vice chair responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Is there sufficient capacity to engage all members</li> <li>▪ Difficulty in undertaking a high workload – possible uneven workloads</li> <li>▪ Potential duplication between Panels</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	

# Option 6 : Two Scrutiny Panels – Directorate based



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This would involve the development of two Panels managed by OSMB. The panel could address issues around the responsibilities of the three directorate and the Chief Executives Department. For example:  One panel could address issues around the Corporate Resources and Chief Executives teams while the other address issues around Development and Community Services Teams</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny clearly linked corporate priority within a specific area of activity</li> <li>Members skills could be shared</li> <li>Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>Fewer meetings</li> <li>Easier to manage process</li> <li>Could free some DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>Better attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>Improved relationship between Scrutiny and the directorates</li> <li>Reduction in admin costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less focus on cross cutting issues</li> <li>Longer meetings?</li> <li>Fewer chair and vice chair responsibility</li> <li>Is there sufficient capacity to engage all members</li> <li>Difficulty in undertaking a high workload – possible uneven workloads</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	



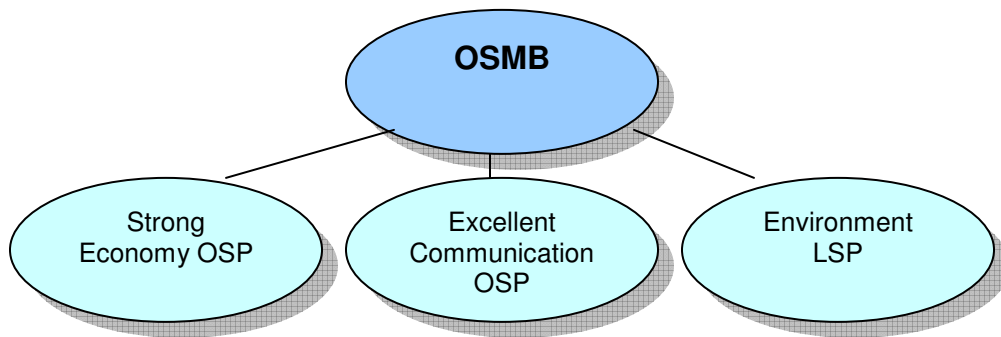
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# The Future of Scrutiny

## Scrutiny Structure Options Report Part 3 : Options for Three Scrutiny Panels

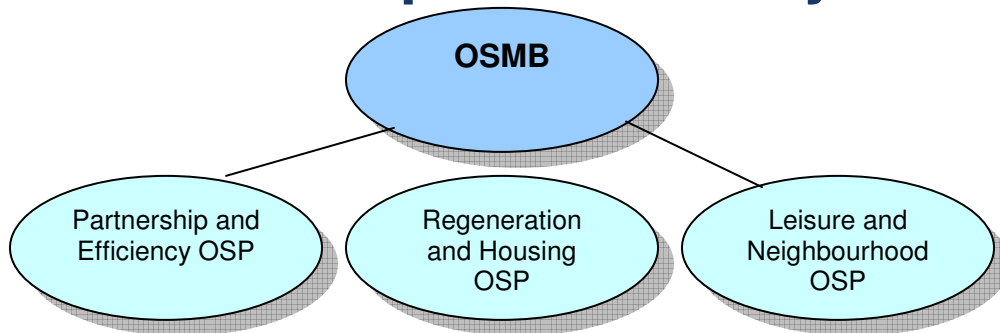


# Option 7 : Three Scrutiny Panels – Sustainable Community Strategy



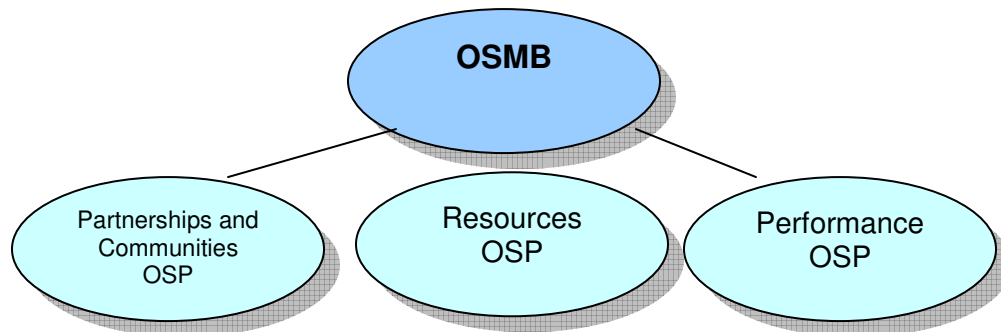
<b>Description</b>	
<p>This would involve the change of focus of the existing three Panel managed by OSMB. The themes could be around the 4 Sustainable Community Strategy aims, each OSP Dealing with one of the SCS aims while sharing the cross cutting inclusive communities aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A strong, sustainable and diverse economic base</li> <li>▪ Inclusive communities</li> <li>▪ Excellent communication networks</li> <li>▪ An attractive and protected environment</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutiny clearly linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy and as a result corporate activity and the LAA</li> <li>▪ Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members skills could be shared</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ Clear accountability</li> <li>▪ Capacity to manage/cope with workloads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No Fewer meetings</li> <li>▪ Would not free up any DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>▪ May not address improved attendance at formal meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
More support for three panels at workshop	

# Option 8 : Three Scrutiny Panels – Corporate Priority



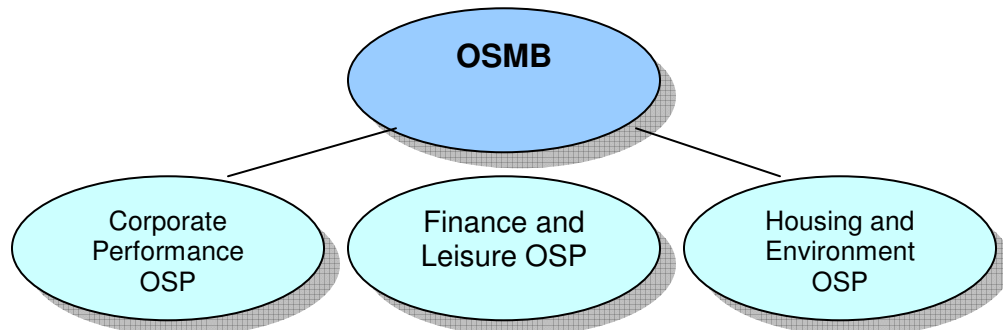
<p><b>Description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This would involve the change of focus of the existing three Panels managed by OSMB. The themes could be around the 7 corporate priorities, each OSP Dealing with two individual priorities of the corporate plan and all possibly addressing the cross cutting nature of the first priority which is Customer Excellence. Equally one Panel could take on an overall responsibility for the Customer excellence Priority For example:          One Scrutiny Panel Could deal with Customer Excellence, Partnership and Efficiency          One Panel could deal with Regeneration and Housing          One Panel could deal with Leisure and Neighbourhood Management</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny clearly linked corporate priority and as a result clearer focus on corporate activity</li> <li>Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>Members skills could be shared</li> <li>Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>Clear direction for scrutiny linked to corporate plan and fits council objectives</li> <li>Clear accountability</li> <li>Capacity to manage/cope with workloads</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disadvantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Fewer meetings</li> <li>Would not free up any DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>May not address improved attendance at formal meetings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Comment / conclusion</b></p> <p>More support for three panels at workshop</p>	

# Option 9 : Three Scrutiny Panels – Issue Based



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This would involve the change of focus of the existing three Panels managed by OSMB. The three panels could address key areas of corporate governance . For example :           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One may deal with Partnerships and Communities</li> <li>One with Resources</li> <li>One with Performance and Risk .</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny linked to issues of corporate importance and as a result clearer focus on corporate activity</li> <li>Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>Members skills could be shared</li> <li>Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>Capacity to manage/cope with workloads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Fewer meetings</li> <li>Would not free up any DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>May not address improved attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>Possible duplication across panels</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
More support for three panels at workshop	

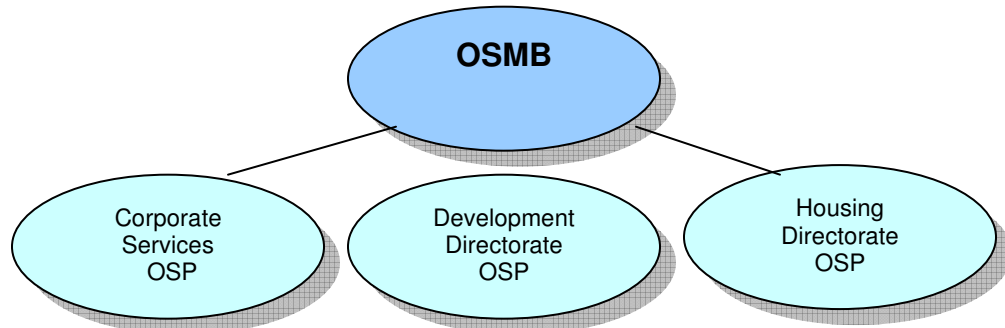
# Option 10 : Three Scrutiny Panels – Portfolio Holder based



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This would involve the change of focus of the existing three managed by OSMB. The panel could address issues around the responsibilities of the Executive for example One panel could address Equalities Human Resources, Communications and Performance One Panel could address Finance and leisure , One Panel could address Housing and the Environment</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutiny clearly linked corporate priority and as a result clearer focus on corporate activity</li> <li>▪ Improved Executive Scrutiny working</li> <li>▪ Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members skills could be shared</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ Capacity to manage/cope with workloads</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No Fewer meetings</li> <li>▪ Would not free up any DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>▪ May not address improved attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>▪ Possible duplication across panels</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
More support for three panels at workshop	

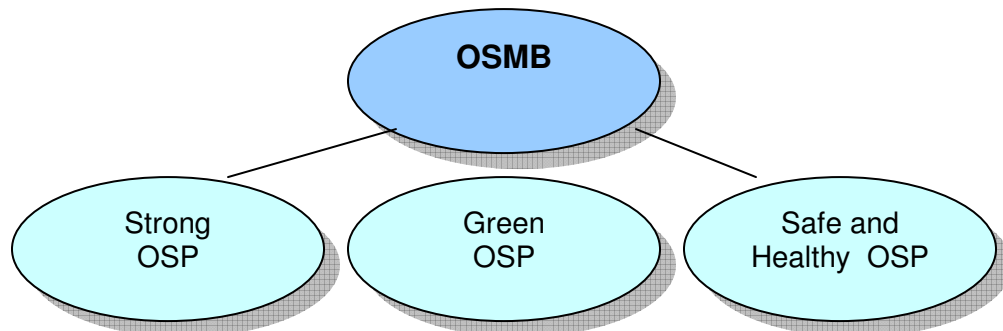


# Option 11 : Three Scrutiny Panels – Directorate based



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This would involve the change of focus of the existing three managed by OSMB. The panel could address issues around the responsibilities of the three directorate and the Chief Executives Department. For example:             One panel could address issues around the Corporate Resources and Chief Executives teams            One panel could address issues around the Development Directorate            One Panel could address the work of the Community Services Teams</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny linked to corporate priority and as a result clearer focus on corporate activity</li> <li>Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>Members skills could be shared</li> <li>Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>Improved relationship between Scrutiny and the directorates</li> <li>Capacity to manage/cope with workloads</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Fewer meetings</li> <li>Would not free up any DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>May not address improved attendance at formal meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
More support for three panels at workshop	

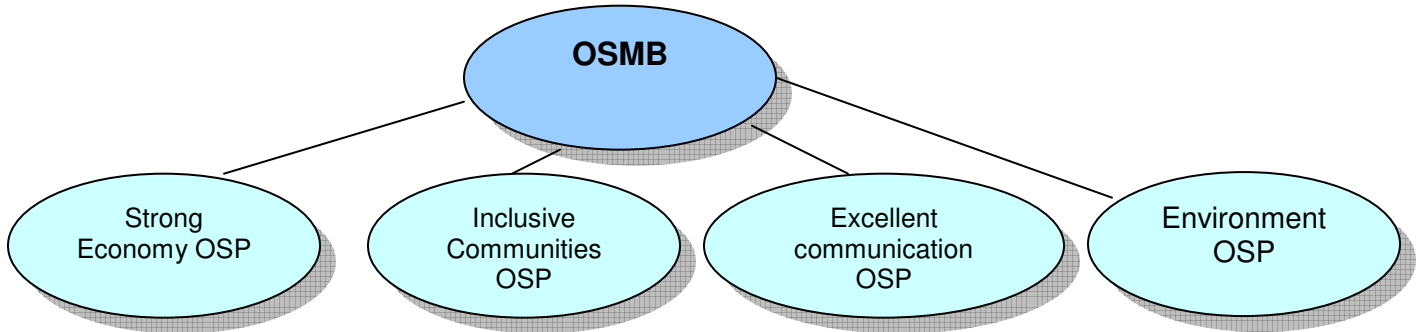
## Option 12 : Three Scrutiny Panels – No change



<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This would involve the change of focus of the existing three managed by OSMB. The panel could address issues around the responsibilities of the Executive for example One panel could address Equalities, Human Resources, Communications and Performance while another Finance, Housing Leisure and the Environment</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>Members skills could be shared</li> <li>Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>Capacity to manage/cope with workloads</li> <li>Least change and disruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutiny not clearly linked corporate priority and as a result no clearer focus on corporate activity</li> <li>No Fewer meetings</li> <li>Would not free up any DSO time to support rather than administer</li> <li>May not address improved attendance at formal meetings</li> <li>May not encourage improvement</li> <li>Does not move scrutiny forward</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
More support for three panels at workshop	

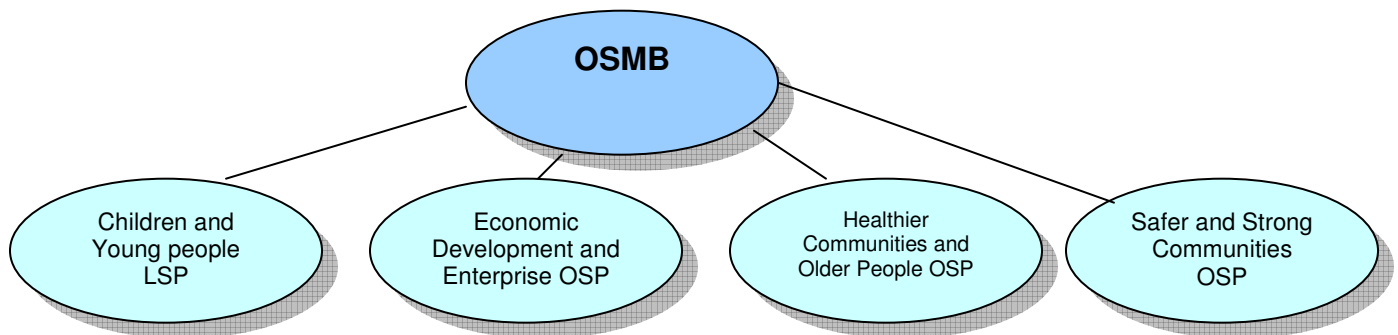


# Option 13 : Four Scrutiny Panels – Sustainable Community Strategy



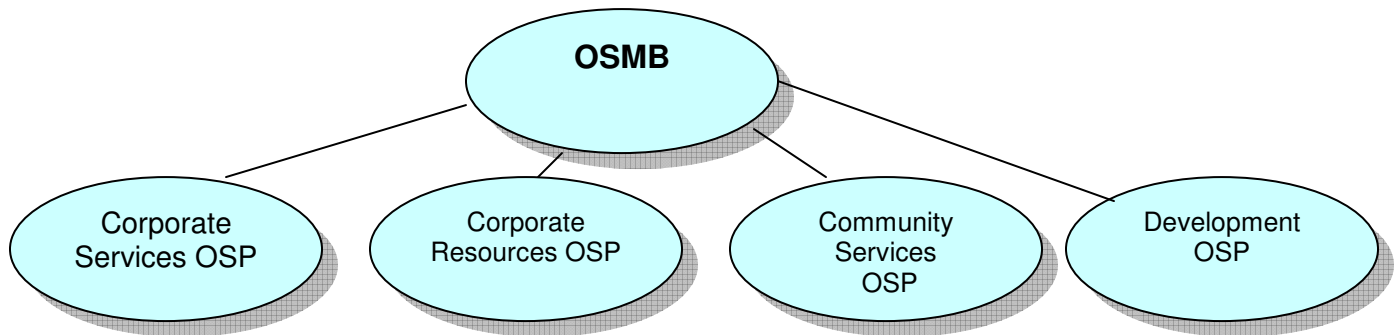
<b>Description</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This would involve the development of four Panel managed by OSMB. Each Panel could address each of the 4 Sustainable Community Strategy aims :</li> <li>▪ A strong, sustainable and diverse economic base</li> <li>▪ Inclusive communities</li> <li>▪ Excellent communication networks</li> <li>▪ An attractive and protected environment</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutiny clearly linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy and as a result corporate priority and the LAA</li> <li>▪ Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More chair and vice chair responsibility</li> <li>▪ More meetings</li> <li>▪ Harder to manage process</li> <li>▪ Would require more resources as could not be sustained by existing DSO's</li> <li>▪ Potential for poorer attendance at formal meetings as meetings increase</li> <li>▪ Increase in admin costs</li> <li>▪ Capacity issue in terms of workloads and also Member capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
This would require growth in scrutiny support	

# Option 14 : Four Scrutiny Panels – Local Area Agreement



<b>Description</b>	
<p>This would involve the development of four Panel managed by OSMB. The themes could be around the 4 Local Area Agreement Blocks with each OSP Dealing with one of the following blocks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children and Young People</li> <li>▪ Economic Development and Enterprise</li> <li>▪ Healthier Communities and Older people</li> <li>▪ Safer and Stronger communities</li> </ul>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear links to the LAA</li> <li>▪ Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ More outward focussed scrutiny</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutiny less clearly linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy and as a result corporate priority</li> <li>▪ Less internal focus</li> <li>▪ More chair and vice chair responsibility</li> <li>▪ More meetings</li> <li>▪ Harder to manage process</li> <li>▪ Would require more resources as could not be sustained by existing DSO's</li> <li>▪ Potential for poorer attendance at formal meetings as meetings increase</li> <li>▪ Increase in admin costs</li> <li>▪ Capacity issue in terms of workloads and also Member capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
This would require growth in scrutiny support	

# Option 15 : Four Scrutiny Panels – Directorate Based



<b>Description</b>	
This would involve the development of four Panel managed by OSMB. The themes would be for each of the Directorates and Chief Executives Teams.	
▪	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear links to the Directorates and as a result corporate priorities</li> <li>▪ Focus on some cross cutting issues</li> <li>▪ Members expertise could be directed to clear areas of interest</li> <li>▪ More outward focussed scrutiny</li> <li>▪ Improved relationships between scrutiny and directorates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less clear focus</li> <li>▪ More chair and vice chair responsibility</li> <li>▪ More meetings</li> <li>▪ Harder to manage process</li> <li>▪ Would require more resources as could not be sustained by existing DSO's</li> <li>▪ Potential for poorer attendance at formal meetings as meetings increase</li> <li>▪ Increase in admin costs</li> <li>▪ Capacity issue in terms of workloads and also Member capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Comment / conclusion</b>	
This would require growth in scrutiny support	