

**REPORT TO MEMBERS' ADVISORY
PANEL**

July 2006

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

New Scrutiny Arrangements for Stockton - Update

Summary

Following consideration of new Scrutiny arrangements by the Members' Advisory Panel, the Council approved the recommended changes. This report provides an update on the implementation of the new arrangements.

Recommendation

That the Members' Advisory Panel note progress on the implementation of the new arrangements.

Background

1. Following an all Member Seminar and consideration by the Members' Advisory Panel, Cabinet, on 3 November 2005, made the following recommendations for new scrutiny co-ordination arrangements. These recommendations were subsequently approved by Council on 14 December 2005 and are set out below:

- a. The development and implementation of stronger coordination arrangements for scrutiny work be approved by:
 - Extending the remit of the Executive Scrutiny Committee to include coordination of an overall scrutiny work programme, with all Scrutiny Chairs becoming members of this new overview committee.
 - A scrutiny liaison forum of Scrutiny Chairs, Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors
- b. The reorganisation of thematic select committees to focus on time-limited policy review and development work be adopted, with
 - Six such select committees with the headline remits set out in Appendix 1 of the report
 - A separate Audit Committee be formed which sits outside of the select committee structure (in line with recommended good practice).
- c. The appointment of an additional scrutiny officer on the basis specified within the report, be approved.
- d. Further work and consultation be undertaken to develop the detail and constitutional changes needed for the new arrangements.
- e. Arrangements be then reviewed by the Members' Advisory Panel after six months of operation, with an interim progress check at the three month point.

2. A further report was submitted to the Members' Advisory Panel on 19 December 2005 setting out detailed terms of reference for the Executive Scrutiny Committee, Scrutiny Liaison Forum, and the six thematic Select Committees and proposed terms of reference for the Audit Committee. The terms of reference and compositions of the Committee were approved by Council on 5 January 2006.

3. The report updates the Panel with a check on progress to date.

Scrutiny Liaison Forum

4. A meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum took place on 8 March 2006. The Forum was invited to consider a submitted schedule of potential topics for review by Select Committees in 2006/07. The topics had been identified by Select Committees, Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team. The following topics emerged as those supported by the Forum for further consideration by Executive Scrutiny Committee:

Adults, Leisure & Culture Select Committee

- Preston Hall Park & Museum Strategy;
- Performing Arts/Leisure Publicity/Festivals (inc SIRD, BIFF etc);
- Adult Protection/ Vulnerable Adults (examining potential areas that could usefully be reviewed);
- River Based Leisure Facilities

Children & Young People Select Committee

- Teenage Conception/Pregnancy Rates in Stockton Borough;
- Obesity (inc sport & leisure activities; diet and nutrition, school dinners);
- Educational Attainment of Looked After Children
- Youth Matters Policy (examining potential areas that could usefully be reviewed)

Health Select Committee

- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
- NHS Dentist Provision in Stockton Borough
- Implications of Darzi decision
- Other Statutory referrals; eg from Strategic Health Authority, Primary Care Trust etc.

Environment & Regeneration Select Committee

- Street Lighting/Energy Costs
- Cemeteries & Memorials
- Follow-ups of previous reviews: Waste Issues, Planning Improvements as programmed
- Concessionary Fares.

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

- Tristar

- Housing -Nomination & Allocations/Support for Homeless & new tenants
- Community Wardens/Anti Social Behaviour Enforcement
- Traveller provision.

Corporate Policy Review Select Committee

- Consultation

Executive Scrutiny Committee

5. The Executive Scrutiny Committee met on 7 April 2006 to consider Business Case Frameworks for proposed topics and recommended the following topics to Select Committees:

<i>Adults, Leisure and Culture</i>	Preston Hall & Park/Museum Strategy
<i>Children and Young People</i>	Reducing Teenage conception rate in Stockton Borough
<i>Corporate Policy</i>	Consultation
<i>Environment and Regeneration</i>	Street Lighting
<i>Health</i>	NHS Dentistry Provision in Stockton Borough
<i>Housing and Community Safety</i>	Access to Tristar Services/ Pre Inspection monitoring

6. The Executive Scrutiny Committee has meetings scheduled on a monthly basis and has been receiving reports from Select Committee Chairs on the progress of reviews at each meeting. It has also approved a work programme which includes consideration of draft final reports prior to submission to Cabinet, performance monitoring and other development work.

7. At its meeting on 4 July, the Executive Scrutiny Committee approved proposals for the monitoring of previously agreed scrutiny recommendations and improved content for the scrutiny website.

Scrutiny Work Programme

8. Select Committee have agreed scopes and project plans for time limited reviews. At each meeting of the Executive Scrutiny Committee, Select Committee Chairs give an update on the progress of reviews against the agreed timescale. All reviews are progressing well and the timescales for reviews are currently unchanged from the original project plans.

9. Link Officers have been identified for each review to assist with technical or specialist expertise for each review and protocols are being developed to ensure that Corporate Directors and Cabinet Members are able to have necessary input at key stages of reviews including tripartite meetings involving Chairs and Vice Chairs of Select Committee, Scrutiny Officers, Link Officers, Corporate Directors and Cabinet Members.

Appointment of Scrutiny Team Leader

10. The Scrutiny Team Leader is now in place and is responsible for the project management of all scrutiny reviews to ensure the effective delivery of scrutiny.

Scrutiny Toolkit

11. A Scrutiny Toolkit has been prepared and circulated to all Members. This explains the scrutiny process and provides guidance to Members, Officers and other individuals taking part in

the scrutiny process. The Toolkit has been circulated as a working draft and will be finalised following the review of the new scrutiny co-ordination arrangements in the autumn.

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