

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2006

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY

REVIEW OF NEW SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

SUMMARY

To seek comments from Executive Scrutiny on the proposed approach to the review of the Council's new Scrutiny Co-ordination Arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Scrutiny are asked to comment on the methodology for the review of the Council's new Scrutiny Co-ordination Arrangements. Subject to this, a report will then be presented Members' Advisory Panel on 2 November.

DETAIL

1. Following an all Member Seminar and consideration by the Members' Advisory Panel, Cabinet, on 3 November 2005, recommended new scrutiny co-ordination arrangements which were subsequently approved by Council on 14 December 2005. It was agreed that there would be an interim progress check at the three month point, and that the arrangements would be reviewed by the Members' Advisory Panel after six months of operation.

2. The interim progress check revealed that all arrangements had been implemented as agreed and progress was reported to Executive Scrutiny Committee on 4 July and the Members' Advisory Panel on 18 August.

3. In order to feed into the review by the Members' Advisory Panel, it is proposed that views on the implementation of the new arrangements are sought from Members and Officers on key issues. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has designed a self evaluation framework based on the principles set out in the "Good Scrutiny Guide". This approach could be adopted to review the Council's new scrutiny co-ordination arrangements by focusing on the key questions contained in the Framework. The subsidiary questions could be used as prompts by facilitators during workshop sessions. The framework aims to provide objectivity by asking the evaluator to

- demonstrate evidence of achievement
- identify areas for improvement
- highlight potential barriers to improvement

4. The framework can be used in a variety of ways. The following approach is proposed:

- Use the framework as a survey sent to all Councillors and added members
- Hold separate workshops for

- Executive Scrutiny, Select Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs
- Cabinet Members
- Officers (CMT, Link Officers and Scrutiny Officers)

The results can then be used to identify areas for improvement for further discussion at Members' Advisory Panel.

5. It is proposed that the review should take place end November/ December to enable Members to have an input following the completion of the first reviews under the new arrangements.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no direct financial or legal implications.

RISK ASSESSMENT

13. The review is intended to assess the effectiveness of the new scrutiny co-ordination arrangements in Stockton and make appropriate recommendations for improvements.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

14. Service Delivery (Enhance Local Democracy).

CONSULTATION

15. The proposed approach will be subject to consultation with Members' Advisory Panel.

Director of Law and Democracy

Name of Contact Officer: Margaret Waggott
Telephone No: 01642 527064
Email Address: margaret.waggott@stockton.gov.uk

Name of Contact Officer: Judy Trainer
Telephone No: 01642 528158
Email Address: Judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk

<u>Background Papers:</u>	None
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	Not Ward Specific
<u>Property Implications:</u>	None

SURVEY/ WORKSHOP QUESTIONS PRO FORMA

NB Table will be inserted following each key question

1. PROVIDE “CRITICAL FRIEND” CHALLENGE

- Does scrutiny provide an effective challenge to the Cabinet?

Evidence of what do we do well?	How can we improve?
What are the barriers to improvement?	

- How does scrutiny have an impact on the work of the Cabinet?
- How does scrutiny routinely challenge the Authority’s Corporate Strategy and budget?
- Are external partners involved in scrutiny and how are they included?
- Does scrutiny work effectively with the Cabinet and Senior Management?

2. REFLECT THE VOICE AND CONCERNS OF THE PUBLIC AND ITS COMMUNITIES

- **How is the work of scrutiny informed by the public**
- **How does scrutiny make itself accessible to the public**
- **How does scrutiny communicate**

3. TAKE THE LEAD AND OWN THE SCRUTINY PROCESS

- **Does scrutiny operate with political impartiality?**
- **Does scrutiny have ownership of its own work programme?**
- **Do scrutiny Members consider that they have a worthwhile and fulfilling role?**
- **What would encourage greater attendance at Select Committee meetings?**
- **Is there a constructive working partnership with officers including support arrangements for scrutiny?**

4. MAKE AN IMPACT ON SERVICE DELIVERY

- **How is scrutiny workload co-ordinated and integrated in to the corporate processes?**
- **What evidence is there to show that scrutiny has contributed to improvement?**
- **How well is information required by scrutiny managed?**