

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

15 JANUARY 2008

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LAW
AND DEMOCRACY**

SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - UPDATE

SUMMARY

To report progress against the scrutiny improvement plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To note and comment on progress against the scrutiny improvement plan.

SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. A review of the operation of the Council's new scrutiny co-ordination arrangements took place during November/December 2006. Views on the implementation of the new arrangements were sought from Members and Officers utilising the Centre for Public Scrutiny's self evaluation framework. The framework was based on the principles set out in the "Good Scrutiny Guide".
2. An Improvement Plan was developed based on feedback from the review and this was approved by Executive Scrutiny Committee in May 2007.
3. A summary of progress against the improvement plan is attached.

EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY AWAY DAY

4. In addition to the Scrutiny Improvement Plan, a number of other improvements were identified by Members at an Executive Scrutiny Away Day held on 11 July 2007. Progress in respect of the specific actions identified are set out below:

Progress Achieved:

- The relevant Cabinet Member is now invited to attend the Select Committee meeting when the final report is agreed as a matter of course to enable a wider discussion on any areas of disagreement following the tri partite meeting
- Ongoing consideration of national developments and need to take this into account into future work programming and resourcing of scrutiny
- Pre agenda meetings are scheduled in prior to Select Committee meetings

Outstanding Issues:

- Call In procedures and publicity protocols are to be reviewed as part of the Ethical Governance Action Plan. As a first stage, the procedures and practices of other North East Councils have been sought in order to compare different Council approaches

- Scope to strengthen scrutiny of performance and finance by Executive Scrutiny Committee and thematic Select Committees
- Standing Item to be included on all Executive Scrutiny Agendas on sharing best practice
- In the New Year, an item will be included on the agendas of quasi judicial bodies to seek suggestions for scrutiny topics
- Consider options for presentation of Scrutiny Reports to Council with the Executive response

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5. There are no direct financial or legal implications identified at this stage.

RISK ASSESSMENT

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

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

7. Service Delivery (Enhance Local Democracy).

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

Background Papers: None
Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward Specific
Property Implications: None

PROGRESS AGAINST SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – JANUARY 2008

	Improvement Area	Key Actions	Responsibility	By When	Progress	Progress Score
S1	Strengthen Links with External Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish points of contact with key external bodies and agree roles and working practices 	HODS Scrutiny Team Leader	Sept 2007	A report will be presented to the Renaissance Board in the New Year to seek suggestions for future review topics.	3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop mechanisms to involve partners in setting the scrutiny work programme/ engagement with reviews 	HODS Scrutiny Team Leader	Jan 2008	Action has been delayed in order to take account of legislative changes in the LGPIH Act. Report presented to CMT on 26 November on widening involvement. Report to be submitted to Executive Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in involve the LSP in the future setting the scrutiny work programme.	2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include links to external bodies on Scrutiny Web Site 	Scrutiny Team	June 2007	Links included.	1
S2	Engage Wider Select Committee Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote use of task and finish groups 	Select Committee	Ongoing	This is now being considered as a useful scrutiny tool. Two task and finish groups have been established in the current year.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate roles to individual Members recognising different skills/ interests 	Select Committee	Ongoing	Potential for this is assessed as each review progresses.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiment with ways of involving all Members in agreeing questioning plans prior to attendance by witnesses. 	Select Committee	Ongoing	Select Committees have experimented with pre meetings to agree questions prior to meeting with external witnesses.	1

S3	Raise Profile of Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include regular articles in Stockton News and KYIT on current reviews 	Scrutiny Team	Ongoing	Articles included in: Stockton News: Summer 2007 KYIT: July 07 and Nov 07	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop Scrutiny Website (e.g. FAQs, tracking of scrutiny recommendations and facility to suggest a scrutiny topic) 	Scrutiny Team	June - Oct 2007	Further improvements have been made to the scrutiny website including FAQs, the facility to suggest to a topic, links to external websites, on line toolkit and leaflets. The current position in respect of tracking scrutiny recommendations will be placed on the website following consolidated progress reports to Select Committees in the new year.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop easy to understand paper based publicity information (e.g. posters/postcards/leaflets to be placed in libraries, community centres etc) 	Scrutiny Team	June 2007	In addition to the Annual Report, a leaflet for witnesses attending meetings has been developed and a general scrutiny leaflet has been produced and placed in reception centres and libraries.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce quarterly scrutiny newsletter 	Scrutiny Team Select Cttee Chairs MAP/ESC	June 2007	This has been produced as part of the new Democratic Services Newsletter "Doors to Democracy". The newsletter has been issued in August and November 2007.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review publicity protocols and process for issue of scrutiny press releases and develop positive links with the local media 	HODS/Scrutiny Team Leader	July 2007	In accordance with the Ethical Governance Action Plan, the practice of other North East Local Authorities has been obtained for benchmarking purposes prior to the drafting of a report to Executive Scrutiny and MAP.	3

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of an Annual Scrutiny Report highlighting key scrutiny achievements 	Scrutiny Team ESC	Annually	<p>Consultation now takes place with Press and PR at the scoping of all scrutiny reviews to agree the most appropriate approach for reviews. (eg for the recent memorial review, individual press briefings and photo opportunities were held resulting in positive media coverage)</p> <p>Scrutiny has been successful in securing a number of media articles in relation to recent “public facing” reviews.</p> <p>Published June 2007.</p>	1 1
S4	Develop Links with Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold awareness raising event (for partners, public, community/voluntary sector) Review approach to consultation and promote effective community engagement 	HODS/ Scrutiny Team	Dec 07	<p>A Democratic Services Open Day was held on 17 October to raise awareness of Democratic Services with the public. A more targeted approach with partners and third sector is yet to be held.</p> <p>Action has been delayed in order to take account of legislative changes in the LGPIH Act.</p>	3
			HODS/ Scrutiny Team Leader	Jan 2008	<p>Consultation takes place with the Corporate Consultation Team on the approach for individual reviews and this is included in the scoping document for reviews. A more detailed consultation plan is produced for specific reviews as appropriate.</p> <p>A Community Engagement Strategy for Democratic Services has also been produced.</p>	1

S5	Making an Impact on Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote greater independent challenge through co-option of expert witnesses 	Select Committee	Ongoing	This is considered as part of the scoping of each review. The Arts, Leisure and Culture Select Committee have recently co-opted Alan Slater (British Waterways) onto the committee for the duration of the River Based Leisure Review.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider need for dedicated scrutiny budget and submit bid as necessary and review support for scrutiny generally in line with new legislative requirements 	HODS	Sept 2007	In accordance with the Ethical Governance Action Plan, the practice of other North East Local Authorities has been obtained for benchmarking purposes prior to the drafting of a report to Executive Scrutiny and MAP.	3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish database to monitor implementation of outstanding scrutiny recommendations 	Scrutiny Team	June 2007	Spreadsheets for the monitoring of review recommendations have been set up and consolidated progress reports will be presented to Select Committees in the New Year.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review approach to selection of scrutiny topics strengthening business case testing to ensure value added 	Scrutiny Team/ ESC	Jan2008	A report has been presented to CMT proposing the use of the PICK approach to selecting topics for in depth review. This will be presented to Executive Scrutiny in the New Year.	2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how best to use the statutory Forward Plan to inform Select Committee work 	HODS Scrutiny Team Leader	June 2007	Regular item at Executive Scrutiny allows Members to consider if items need to be added to the Work Programme.	1

S6	Continuous Improvement of Scrutiny Co-ordination Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment against relevant CPA KLOE 	HODS/ Scrutiny Team	June/ Aug 2007	Assessment completed as part of CPA preparations.	1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review of Scrutiny 	Scrutiny Team	During 2009		2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt performance indicators for scrutiny for benchmarking purposes 	Scrutiny Team	April 2008	The Scrutiny Team have developed some initial performance indicators for scrutiny. (Attached at Annex 1)	1

Assessment of Progress Categories:

1 Achieved (Fully)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified
2 On Track but not yet due for completion	The evidence provided shows that implementation of the recommendation is on track but the timescale specified has not expired.
3 Slipped	<p>The evidence shows that progress on implementation has slipped.</p> <p>An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved should be advised and the reasons for the delay.</p>
4 Not Achieved	<p>The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved.</p> <p>An explanation for non achievement of the recommendation should be provided</p>

Scrutiny Performance Indicators

		2007/08 Q1 Collection	2007/08 Q2 Collection
	Critical Friend Challenge		
S1	Percentage items on work programme taken from the forward plan	Annual Collection	-
	Reflect the Voice and Concerns of the Public		
S2	Percentage of items on the work programme suggested by the public or in response to issues raised through surveys, comments or complaints	Annual Collection	-
S3	Number of visits to the Council's Scrutiny Web Pages	1942	1214
S4	Number of scrutiny articles in the Media	0	6
S5	Percentage of people on the Viewpoint Citizens' Panel who indicate that:	Annual Collection By survey	
	* they have an awareness of scrutiny in Stockton		24.00%
	* they have an understanding of the role of scrutiny		52.00%
	* are aware that they can contribute to the Council's scrutiny process		10.00%

	Take the Lead and Own the Scrutiny Process		
S6	Percentage of Members attending meetings at which they were required	73%	66%
S7	Percentage of Members who feel that they have a worthwhile and fulfilling role	Annual Collection	-
S8	Percentage of Members who feel that they have a good awareness of the role of scrutiny and of their role as a Select Committee Member	Annual Collection	-
S9	Percentage of O&S Work Programmes achieved in the agreed timescales	Annual Collection	-
	Making an Impact on Service Delivery		
S10	The percentage of scrutiny recommendation approved by Cabinet	Annual Collection	-
S11	Percentage of scrutiny recommendations implemented by Cabinet	Annual Collection	-