



The Achievements and Organisation of Overview and Scrutiny in Derby

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To consider the scoping and methodology report attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 To determine whether an independent element should be used to assist with the review.
- 1.3 To decide how the topic review progress reports should be discussed by the Commission

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the Scrutiny Management Commission, SMC, meeting held on 14 September 2004 the Commission resolved to combine the two topics 'So What's Happened Since?' and the 'Organisation of Overview and Scrutiny in Derby' to form its main review for 2005. Officers were requested to prepare a report on the scope and methodology for the combined review and that is set out at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2.2 Following the last meeting, the Chief Executive requested appropriate chief officers to prepare update reports showing progress on implementing topic review recommendations that had been endorsed by Council Cabinet. These are key to determining the first phase of the review: So What's Happened Since?
- 2.3 Given the importance of this matter to SMC members, there is unlikely to be adequate time at the 26 October meeting to give full consideration to the content of each. A two-stage approach may have merit. Firstly, a paper review of the progress reports. That would allow "grey areas" or issues of concern to be identified. Secondly, a subsequent meeting could be held involving interviews with chief officers focussed on those areas.

2.4 Options could include:

Who

- the whole membership of the Commission *or*
- a sub group of SMC members who would report back to the full Commission.

When

- special evening meetings of the Commission or a sub group *or*
- special day time meetings of the Commission or a sub group

2.5 The scoping and methodology report at Appendix Two seeks to offer Members a timetable to achieve a completed review ahead of the Annual Meeting in 2005. A considerable amount of Member time will be needed and unavoidably this will require additional meetings.

2.6 Given the nature of this topic review, and the current staffing difficulties with the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Team reported to the last meeting, I consider that the use of consultants would be particularly beneficial. Initial proposals have been sought from three bodies – the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) at Birmingham University, De Montford University, Leicester and the local government Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The IDeA carried out the peer review of the Council in 2001 that led to our organisational structures for the new constitutional arrangements. It would therefore seem logical to use IDeA this time to review them.

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Background papers:	3 submissions from external consultants
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications; Appendix Two – Description of the combined review; Appendix Three – Progress reports on the implementation of topic review recommendations endorsed by Council Cabinet



IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The estimated cost of engaging external consultants would be in the range of £5,450 to £6,100.

Legal

- 2.1 Under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 councils operating executive arrangements, as Derby does, must have overview and scrutiny arrangements that cover all the functions of the Council. Statutory Guidance lays down further requirements. The review will assess our current arrangements against the Guidance and other d practice.

Personnel

- 3.1 None directly arising

Equalities impact

- 4.1 The review may result in recommendations that makes the overview and scrutiny process more accessible to socially excluded groups

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 The purpose of overview and scrutiny is to be an improving process, so should help contribute to all the objectives and priorities. If the review enhances the overview and scrutiny function that should translate into greater improvement to the services and policies scrutinised subsequently

