



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

## SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 1 November 2005

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission

### External Scrutiny

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Scrutiny Management Commission seeks the views of the other Overview and Scrutiny Commissions on the possibility and practicality of conducting further external scrutiny.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 'External scrutiny' is the term used to describe the process of scrutiny applied by a political assembly to bodies outside the control of its own executive.
- 2.2 The Centre for Public Scrutiny has produced a discussion paper entitled 'External Scrutiny: the voice in the crowded room' which is based on some of the findings of a two-year research project conducted by the Constitution Unit of University College, London. An electronic version of the discussion paper can be accessed via the CfPS website [www.cfps.org.uk/pdf/publications/26.pdf](http://www.cfps.org.uk/pdf/publications/26.pdf) and paper versions will be available at the Commission meeting.
- 2.3 The discussion paper makes it clear that although Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 permits local authorities to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters that affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area, external agencies are at liberty not to be scrutinised, share information, or co-operate with the political authority. Consequently, effective external scrutiny requires a different approach to that used for internal scrutiny.
- 2.4 The City Council's Scrutiny Commissions have to date only conducted a limited amount of external scrutiny, most of which has been health related. However, as the CfPS document points out, external scrutiny does offer a range of different scrutiny opportunities and if conducted correctly can result in worthwhile policy and service improvements.
- 2.5 In addition to health scrutiny, the opportunities for external scrutiny in Derby include aspects of the services provided by:

- The Police
- The Fire and Ambulance Services
- The utilities providers
- The transport providers

2.6 It is suggested that the Scrutiny Management Commission should seek the views of the other Overview and Scrutiny Commissions on the possibility and practicality of conducting further external scrutiny. The Commissions could be asked whether they think it would be appropriate and beneficial for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commissions to undertake more external scrutiny and if so, which particular external services, and which aspects of those services, do they consider should be examined.

2.7 The views of the Commissions could be considered at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Management Commission and if there is support for the concept, a structured programme of external scrutiny could be developed.

<p><b>For more information contact:</b> David Romaine 01332 255598 e-mail david.romaine@derby.gov.uk</p> <p><b>Background papers:</b> Appendix 1 – Implications</p> <p><b>List of appendices:</b></p>
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<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

1. Any costs incurred in carrying out external scrutiny would have to be contained within the Commissions' existing research budgets.

**Legal**

2. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 permits local authorities to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters that affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area

**Personnel**

3. There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

**Equalities impact**

4. Effective external scrutiny would be of benefit to all Derby people.

**Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities**

5. This report has the potential to link to all of the Council's Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities.