



SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

1 November 2005

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Scrutiny in Practice Conference

RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the successful 'Scrutiny in Practice' conference held at Ringwood Hall Hotel, Chesterfield.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Scrutiny in Practice conference was held at Ringwood Hall Hotel, Chesterfield on 29 September. It focused on practical rather than theoretical aspects of overview and scrutiny and aimed to:
 - Develop the skills and knowledge of Scrutiny Members & Officers
 - Raise the profile of Scrutiny within the region and to promote the Officer Network
 - Showcase achievements of effective scrutiny from all across the region
 - Enable elected members and officers from the region to meet other colleagues and share ideas and experiences
- 2.2 The event was organised by a team of officers under the auspices of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Scrutiny Officer Network which has been established to share good practice and provide support to officers involved in overview and scrutiny. Officers from Derby City Council played a full and active part in the team organising the event. Other members of the team included officers from Bolsover DC, Ashfield DC, Derbyshire Dales DC, North East Derbyshire DC and Chesterfield DC.
- 2.3 The key a note address, given by Dr Jane Martin, Executive Director at the Centre for Public Scrutiny on 'Public Scrutiny for Public Accountability'. Presentations were made by David Romaine on the Scrutiny Simulator and Councillor Les Allen on his experiences as a Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education and a Vice Chair of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Commission. There were also four workshops covering
 - Budget Scrutiny
 - Engaging the Community
 - The role and skills needed to be an effective scrutiny councillor

- Developing effective relationships with the executive, the council and area committees.

- 2.4 In total 86 delegates attended from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire including ten from Derby City Council. Feedback from the delegates shows that the event was successful and that it achieved its aims. Members found the opportunity to network and share experiences extremely useful with vast majority remaining behind right till the end, which is not often the case. Delegates commented that this conference was focused on local needs and was considerably cheaper than some of the national events and thus offered good value for money.
- 2.5 A key contributor to the success of the event was the decision by a group of authorities to underwrite the administrative cost by offering a contribution of £500 in advance in return for five free places. This enabled the organising team to concentrate on the administrative aspects without having to worry about the finances.
- 2.6 Our experience shows that organising an event in partnership with other authorities has many positive benefits. It reduces administrative workload, spreads the financial risk and encourages higher level of participation from members.
- 2.7 Members are therefore asked to give their support in principal to future collaborative work with other authorities in organising similar type of events to continue to help the development of overview and scrutiny in the region.

For more information contact:	Mahroof Hussain 01332 255597 e-mail mahroof.hussain@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Management Commission approved a contribution of £500 towards the cost of holding the event in return for five free places at its July meeting.
- 1.2 A total of ten delegates attended the event from Derby the cost of which will be contained within Overview and Scrutiny budgets.

Legal

2. None.

Personnel

3. None.

Equalities impact

4. Overview and scrutiny contributes to the improvements in services of all the residents.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. The report supports the Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change through our services and in partnership with others.