

## **STRUCTURE AND RESOURCING OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 To consider the responses of the political groups and decide on appropriate action.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 2.1 At their last meeting on 14 December 2009, the Commission considered two reports relating to the structure and resourcing of overview and scrutiny at the Council. These reports (marked Report 1 and Report 2) are attached to Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.2 The Commission resolved to refer both reports, along with information of the future workload of scrutiny commissions, to the Group Leaders asking for the views of the political groups.
- 2.3 The attached note (Appendix 2) was sent to the political group leaders on 6 January 2009. It was also sent to the two independent members, Councillors Chera and Graves.
- 2.4 The Commission is invited to consider the responses attached at Appendix 3 and decide on appropriate action.

**For more information contact:** Steve Dunning 01332 255462 e-mail [steve.dunning@derby.gov.uk](mailto:steve.dunning@derby.gov.uk)

**Background papers:**

**List of appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Implications
- Appendix 2 – Note to political group leaders
- Appendix 3 – Responses from political groups

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

1. As indicated in Reports 1 and 2.

**Legal**

2. As indicated in Reports 1 and 2.

**Personnel**

3. As indicated in Reports 1 and 2.

**Equalities Impact**

4. As indicated in Reports 1 and 2.

**Corporate Themes and Priorities**

5. As indicated in Reports 1 and 2.

To: Councillors Jennings, Jones and Williamson

### Structure of Overview and Scrutiny

I am writing to ask for your assistance in gauging your political group's views about the organisation of Overview and Scrutiny in the Council.

The last meeting of the Scrutiny Management Commission on 14 December 2009 received the two reports attached:

- **Report 1**, prepared at the request of the Chair and Vice Chair, proposing a review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny structure, and including a scoping report.
- **Report 2**, inviting the Commission to consider possible measures to reduce scrutiny costs as a contribution towards the Revenue Budget Strategy 2010 – 12/13.

The reports explain that the Council has operated a largely consistent scrutiny model since December 2001. However, staff vacancies, additional scrutiny functions and limited Member time warrant a review of the current structure.

Rather than proceed with a review, the Commission instead decided that the appropriate step would be provide both reports to the three group leaders together with a questionnaire seeking the views of the groups.

The current model is six commissions and two sub-commissions, plus the new second role of the Scrutiny Management Commission as the Council's statutory Crime and Disorder Committee. Paragraph 20 of Report 1 encapsulates the issue.

20. The scrutiny resource available to the Council can either be spread widely across a relatively large number of scrutiny committees – as it is now, or it can be concentrated on a smaller number of committees. The type of approach that is taken, widespread but shallow, or narrow and deep is a matter of choice for the Council but if the available resource is spread too thinly there is a danger that the Scrutiny Commissions will have insufficient time and resources to properly undertake their work and that their outputs will consequently be of limited value.

The Scrutiny Management Commission wished particularly to draw the attention of the political groups to the following issues:

- The increasing role and workload of overview and scrutiny arising from additional powers and duties imposed by recent legislation including:
  - scrutiny of crime and disorder partners and partnerships
  - scrutiny of partners responsible for delivering LAA targets
  - Councillor Calls for Action
  - new statutory petitions procedure

- the difficulties for Members in managing competing demands on their time from other work such as neighbourhood boards/forums, casework and regulatory committees.
- The need for adequate staff resources to support the scrutiny function. Due to vacancies, there are currently 2.6 full-time-equivalent staff in the overview and scrutiny co-ordination section. The approved establishment is 4 full-time-equivalent staff. If the Council retains a 6 commissions plus 2 sub commissions structure, it is considered that the workload can only be managed if vacancies are filled to bring staffing levels back up to 4. If a model involving a significant reduction in the number of commissions, coupled with more carefully selected and focussed scrutiny reviews, were adopted, then the current staffing level could be maintained.

The key question is whether Members would wish to continue with the existing model or concentrate resources by having fewer commissions and targeted reviews.

I would be grateful if you would obtain your Members' collective views at the first convenient group meeting. It would assist if a response could be provided to these linked questions.

**a) Taking into account all their other roles as a councillor, do your Members believe that they currently have sufficient time to make our current scrutiny model effective and one which adds value to decision-making?**

**b) Do your Members consider that they can sustain commitment to adequate levels of time and energy to scrutiny over the next three years?**

**c) Do your Members see advantages and/or disadvantages in moving to a model involving fewer commissions with broader portfolios?**

**d) Does your Group have other suggestions to improve and/or modify the operation of overview and scrutiny in the Council? If so, how would those impact on the available officer (and Member) resources?**

Steve Dunning

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6 January 2009

#### Attachments

Report 1. Proposed Review of the Council's Scrutiny Structure

Report 2. Revenue Budget 2010 – 12/13: Provision for Overview and Scrutiny



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

## SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 14 DECEMBER 2009

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Services

### Proposed Review of the Council's Scrutiny Structure

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. Scrutiny Management Commission is recommended to:
  - a) Consider and comment upon the scoping report which is contained in Appendix 2 of this report, and
  - b) Confirm whether they wish to proceed with the review of the Council's Scrutiny Structure which is outlined in the scoping report.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The scoping report contained in Appendix 2 of this report has been prepared in response to a request by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission.
- 2.2 The scoping report outlines a possible review to examine the resources available for scrutiny in Derby and to look at ways in which the available resources might be better matched to the Council's scrutiny requirements.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny Management Commission is recommended to consider and comment upon the scoping report and to confirm whether they wish to proceed with the review.
- 2.4 If members are minded to proceed with the review outlined in the scoping report, work will need to commence in January 2010 if the final report and recommendations of the Commission are to be submitted to full Council at its meeting on 1 March 2010.

**For more information contact:** David Romaine 01332 255598 e-mail david.romaine@derby.gov.uk  
**Background papers:** Appendix 1 – Implications  
**List of appendices:** Appendix 2 – Proposed review of the Council's Scrutiny Structure

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

1. None arising from this report. Changes to the Council scrutiny structure will have financial implications but these cannot be quantified at this stage.

**Legal**

2. None arising from this report.

**Personnel**

3. None arising from this report. Changes to the Council scrutiny structure will have personnel and resource implications but these cannot be quantified at this stage.

**Equalities impact**

4. Effective scrutiny will benefit all Derby people.

**Corporate Objectives**

5. This report has the potential to link with following of the Council's Corporate Objectives:
  - Giving you excellent services and value for money.

## Scoping Report for the Scrutiny Management Commission

**Proposed review of the Council's Scrutiny Structure****1. Introduction**

1. This scoping report has been prepared in response to a request by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission. The report outlines a possible review to examine the resources available for scrutiny in Derby and to look at ways in which the available resources might be better matched to the Council's scrutiny requirements.

**2. The Councils Overview and Scrutiny Commissions – definition of task**

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution defines the terms of reference and the role of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. The Constitution states that within their terms of reference The Overview and Scrutiny Commission will:

- a) Review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions
- b) Make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Council Cabinet and/or any policy, joint or Neighbourhood Board/Forum in connection with the discharge of any functions
- c) Consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants
- d) Consider decisions that have been called in for reconsideration and decide whether to ask the decision maker to reconsider the decision, or, where appropriate, to refer it to full Council.

Article 6 goes on to say that for the purposes of (a) to (d) above Overview and Scrutiny Commission may:

- e) Assist the Council and the Council Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in depth analysis of policy issues
- f) Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options
- g) Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options
- h) Question members of the Council Cabinet and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area

- i) Liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working
- j) Review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Council Cabinet and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time
- k) Review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas
- l) Question members of the Council Cabinet and senior council officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects
- m) Make recommendations as appropriate to the Council Cabinet and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process
- n) Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the overview and scrutiny commission and local people about their activities and performance
- o) Question and, with their consent, gather evidence from any person.

### **3. The Council's existing Scrutiny Structure**

3. To discharge the task set out in the Constitution the Council' Overview and Scrutiny function currently comprises six Overview and Scrutiny Commissions, two Sub Commissions and a Crime and Disorder Committee

4. The existing scrutiny structure is as shown in Figure 1.

#### **3.1 Scrutiny Members**

5. Derby City Council has 51 elected members. Of those 51 members, the seven Council Cabinet members are not eligible to be members of Scrutiny Commissions and the Mayor is not normally a member of any Committee.

6. The remaining 43 elected members are eligible to serve on the Scrutiny Commissions but only 30 of them do so. The distribution of those 30 members between the Scrutiny Committees is shown in Table 1.



7. Table 2 shows the number of Commissions/Committee of which each of the 30 Scrutiny members is a member. It should be noted that as the Scrutiny Management Commission (SMC) is the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, membership of the Crime and Disorder Committee is an automatic consequence of membership of SMC.

#### **4. Time spent on Scrutiny**

8. Table 3 shows the number of scheduled and other meetings that each of the six Overview and Scrutiny Commissions and Sub Commissions, the Sub Committees and the Crime and Disorder Committee that have taken place or are projected to take place in 2009/10.

9. Table 3 shows that at present Scrutiny members have attended or are projected to attend a total of 57 meetings of various kinds during 2009/10.

10. It has been assumed that each meeting involves on average around six hours of members time. This is made up as follows:

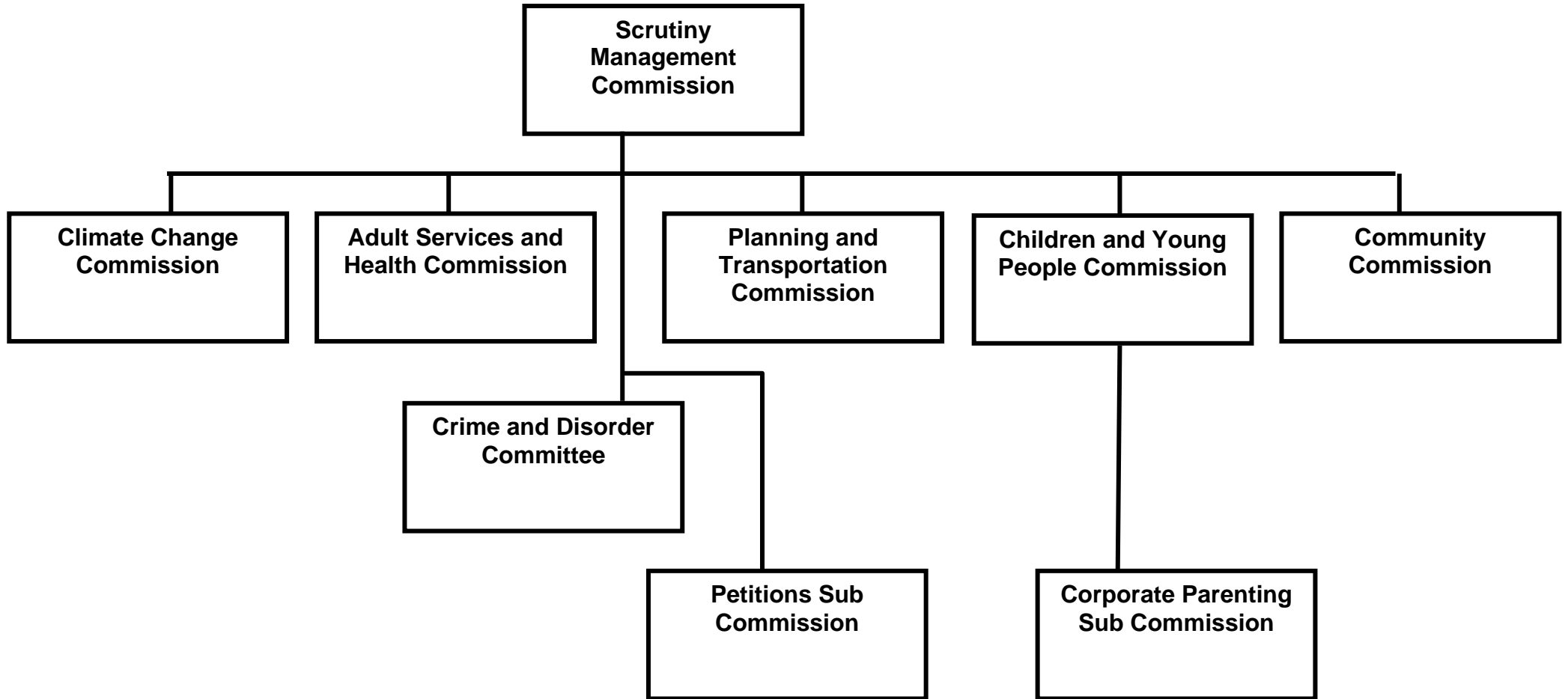
- Preparation for the meeting – 2 hours
- Travel to and from the meeting – 1 hour
- Time at the meeting – 2 hours
- Follow up from the meeting 1 hour

11. An approximation of the total time spent on scrutiny by individual scrutiny members can then be derived from:

12. The sum for all Commissions/Committee of the number of members in each Commission/Committee x the average time/meeting x the number of meetings per year of that Commission/Committee.

13. Working on the average of 6 hours/meeting the total time the 30 scrutiny members will spend on meetings in 2009/10 is around 2400 hours or around 80 hours/member/year. Additional scrutiny work will probably extend this to an average of around 100 hours/year/member. This figure will of course be dependent on the number of Commissions/Committees on which the member serves. A member who only serves on one Commission/Committee which only meets six times per year might only spend around 36 hours/year on scrutiny. Conversely, a member who serves on three Commissions /Committees might spend 140 hours/year on scrutiny.

**Figure 1 Derby City Council's Scrutiny Structure 2009/10**



**Table 1 – Membership of the Council’s Scrutiny Commissions/ Committee**

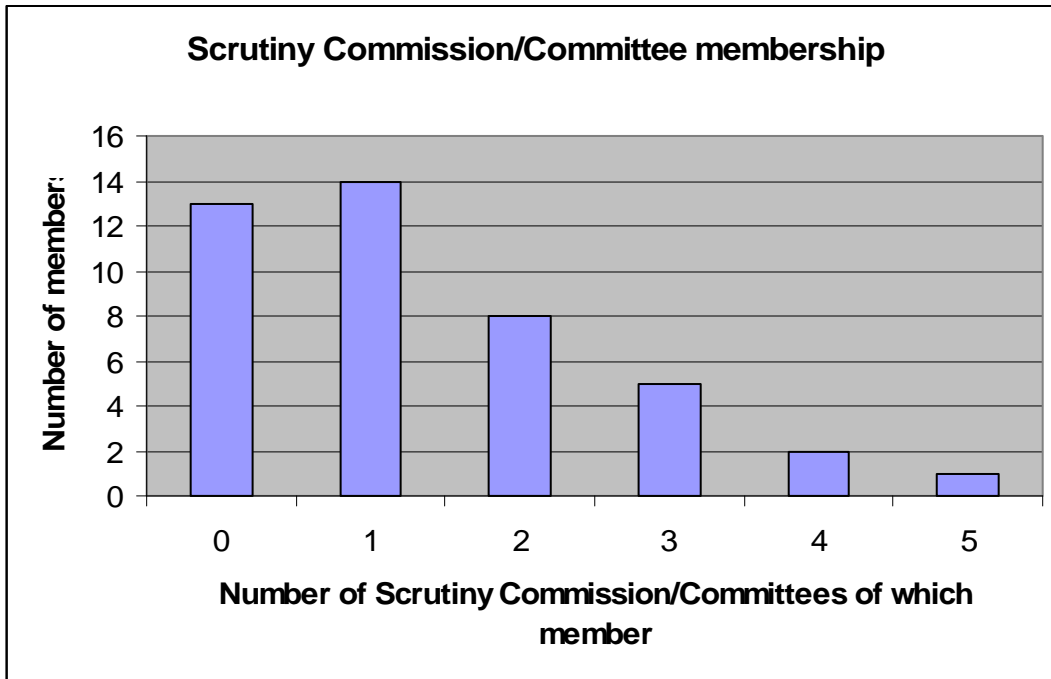
Commission/Committee	Commission/Committee membership (Councillors)
Scrutiny Management Commission (SMC)	LH, RW, DB, MH, FH, FK, CP
Climate Change Commission (CLICH)	PI, RB, PC, MH, JPK, BS, DT, RW
Adult Services and Health Commission (ASH)	FH, AN, JPK, DT, RT, FW, EW
Planning and Transportation Commission (P&T)	CP, MRe, DB, FHa, PI, BL, MRa
Children and Young People Commission (CYP)	SB, EW, JG, LH, FK, RK, PL
Community Commission (CC)	AG, PB, PC, RK, FL, BL, MRd, FR
Crime and Disorder Committee (C&D)	LH, RW, DB, MH, FH, FK, CP
Petitions Sub Commission (PSub)	LH, RW, MH
Corporate Parenting Sub Commission (CPSub)	SB, JG, LH, EW

**Table 2 – Commission/Committee membership of the Scrutiny members**

Member	Commissions/ Committee	Total	Member	Commissions/ Committee	Total
RB	CLICH	1	PL	CYP	1
DB	SMC, P&T, C&D	3	FL	CC	1
PB	CC	1	BL	P&T, CC	2
SB	CYP, CPSub	2	AN	ASH	1
PC	CLICH, CC	2	CP	SMC, P&T, C&D	3
JG	CYP, CPSub	2	MRa	P&T	1
AG	CC	1	MRd	CC	1
FH	P&T	1	MRe	P&T	1
LH	SMC, CYP, C&D, PSub, CPSub	5	FR	CC	1
MH	SMC, CLICH, C&D PSub	4	BS	CLICH	1
FH	SMC, ASH, C&D	3	DT	CLICH, ASH	2
PI	CLICH, P&T	2	RT	ASH	1
JPK	CLICH, ASH	2	RW	SMC, CLICH, C&D, PSub,	4
RK	CYP, CC	2	EW	ASH, CYP, CPSub	3
FK	SMC, CYP, C&D	3	FW	ASH	1

The breakdown of Commission/committee membership is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**



14. The Councillors Commission report 'Representing the Future' published in 2007 shows how the time councillors spend on their duties has nearly doubled from 52 hours per month in 1964 to just under 95 hours by 2006. If members spend around 25 hours/week on Council business the total time they spend in each year will be around  $44 \times 25 = 1100$  hours. Working on the basis of 100 hours/year for scrutiny, the percentage of their time that members spend on scrutiny will therefore be in the order of 9%. This figure of course assumes that all members attend all meetings of the Commission of which they are members and this has not been the case over the past three to six months.

15. The 100 hours/year that each of the 30 scrutiny members theoretically spends on average on scrutiny equates to a yearly total of 3000 hours. A full time equivalent (FTE) post amounts to  $37\text{hrs} \times 44 = 1628$  hours so the 3000 member hours available for scrutiny equates at best to about 1.85 FTE posts.

16. The member resource available for scrutiny may be further eroded by competing challenges for member time, such as Regulatory Committees and Neighbourhood Forums. When these occur there may be periods when the already limited resources available to scrutiny are even further reduced.

**Table 3 – Dates and numbers of Commission meetings**

<b>Commission/ Committee</b>	<b>Dates of scheduled meetings</b>	<b>Dates of call-in, special and review meetings</b>	<b>Total number of meetings</b>
Scrutiny Management Commission	29 June 2009 29 July 2009 28 September 2009 9 November 2009 14 December 2009 2 February 2010 22 March 2010	13 July 2009 23 November 2009	9
Adult Services and Health Commission	22 June 2009 7 September 2009 19 October 2009 7 December 2010 25 January 2010 15 March 2010	12 August	7
Community Commission	10 June 2009 20 July 2009 16 September 2009 26 October 2009 2 December 2009 19 January 2010 30 March 2010		7
Children and Young People Commission	9 June 2009 22 September 2009 3 November 2009 1 December 2009 26 January 2010 16 March 2010	1 June 2009 22 June 2009 25 September 2009 27 October 2009	10
Climate Change Commission	16 June 2009 23 July 2009 14 September 2009 2 November 2009 18 January 2010 31 March 2010		6
Planning and Transportation Commission	15 June 2009 27 July 2009 21 September 2009 21 October 2009 10 December 2009 28 January 2010 9 March 2010	1 June 22 July 2009. Call-in 27 October 2009. Call-in	10
Crime and Disorder Committee	29 June 2009 28 September 2009 14 December 2010 22 March 2010		4
Corporate Parenting Sub Committee	30 June 2009 30 September 2009 6 January 2010 24 March 2010		4
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS IN 2009/10</b>			<b>57</b>

## **5. Scrutiny Officer Support**

17. Up until December 2009, the Council's Scrutiny Commissions and the Crime and Disorder Committee were in theory supported by four full time Co-ordination Officers. In practice the level of Co-ordination support provided has been less than 4.0 FTE because the Head of Service has been involved in other non scrutiny work and a more realistic figure would therefore be around 3.5 FTE.

18. From January 2010 until the re-organisation of the Council is completed, scrutiny support will be provided by two full time Co-ordination Officers and one part-time officer who is returning to work after maternity leave for three days per week. Unless some additional resource is provided the total level of scrutiny support for this period will therefore be 2.6 FTE Co-ordination Officers.

## **6. New Powers for Scrutiny**

19. The last year has seen the introduction of the Councillor Call for Action and the requirement for Councils to have a Crime and Disorder Committee. These both have the potential to impact significantly on local authorities' scrutiny activities and there are other powers/requirements expected which will further increase that burden.

## **7. Need to review the Scrutiny Structure**

20. The scrutiny resource available to the Council can either be spread widely across a relatively large number of scrutiny committees – as it is now, or it can be concentrated on a smaller number of committees. The type of approach that is taken, widespread but shallow, or narrow and deep is a matter of choice for the Council but if the available resource is spread too thinly there is a danger that the Scrutiny Commissions will have insufficient time and resources to properly undertake their work and that their outputs will consequently be of limited value

21. It is considered that the demands of the six Overview and Scrutiny Commissions as well as the Sub Commissions and the Crime and Disorder Committee coupled with a limited and possibly diminishing scrutiny member resource, a possible reduction in the number of scrutiny support officers and the possibility of new scrutiny powers and responsibilities that the Council will have to implement, have created a situation which warrants a new review of the Council's scrutiny structure.

22. It is therefore recommended that the Scrutiny Management Commission takes the opportunity to undertake a short review of the Council's scrutiny function. A suggested outline for the review is set out in the following section of this report.

## **8. Review Outline**

### **8.1 Objectives**

23. It is suggested that the review should:

1. Seek to define much more closely what the Council expects to achieve from scrutiny
2. Identify the resources, in terms of both member time and officer support, that will be needed to deliver the scrutiny outputs that the Council wants

3. Compare and contrast the scrutiny structures of other local authorities that are similar to Derby and assess the scrutiny outputs of those local authorities
4. Define some scrutiny structure options, with advantages and disadvantages for Derby for consideration by SMC.
5. Prepare a report and recommendations for consideration by full Council

## **8.2 Provisional Timetable for the review**

1. Review period – January to mid February 2010
2. Consideration of draft report and recommendations by SMC – late February 2010
3. Final report and recommendations to full Council – 1 March 2010.

## **8.3 Member involvement in the Review**

24. The review will largely be a desktop exercise although it may involve a workshop and questionnaire. It is therefore anticipated that unless members wish otherwise their involvement can be limited to:

- Input to the workshop and questionnaire – if it is decided that these are appropriate
- Participation in a review update at the SMC meeting on 2 February 2010
- The meeting to consider the draft report and recommendations in late February 2010.

DRR 16 November 2009.



**REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 – 12/13  
PROVISION FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 To consider the issues raised and decide whether to make appropriate recommendations as part of the budget process.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

2.5 The Revenue Budget Strategy, as presented to SMC at its meeting on 9 November 2009 by the Corporate Director of Resources, highlighted the following points:

- The Council is forecasting a revenue budget gap of £0.7m in 2010/11, £7m in 2011/12 and £8m in 2012/13.
- The Strategy assumes efficiency savings of £9m in 2009/10 and £4m in 2010/11, being achieved.
- The Strategy assumes £1.3m of salary savings being achieved in 2009/10.

2.6 In the light of these challenges, this report discusses how savings could be made in the overview and scrutiny budget.

2.7 The current overview and scrutiny revenue budget is made up as follows:

<u>Staffing</u>	£218,000
1 x Head of Scrutiny and Complaints	
2 x Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officers	
1 x Assistant Co-ordination Officer	
1 x Team Administrator	
 <u>Other</u>	 £24,000
Research and Training	

2.8 The Head of Scrutiny and Complaints (David Romaine) is retiring at the end of the year. In view of the impending Corporate Restructure of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier posts, David's post is not being filled at the present time and temporary arrangements will be made to support the scrutiny commissions. The Assistant Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer is due to return from maternity leave in January 2010 and has expressed a wish to work part-time. These factors present an opportunity for alternative arrangements to be considered which could lead to financial savings.



- 2.9 The scrutiny team currently supports six scrutiny commissions plus two sub commissions. It is considered that four officers is the appropriate resource needed to support the current structure. However, if the number of commissions were to be reduced significantly, it would be possible to service the commissions' requirements with fewer staff. There would also be an opportunity to consider a more flexible approach to supporting the Commissions between the Scrutiny and Constitutional Services teams.
- 2.10 A possible revised scrutiny structure is given in Appendix 2. This would see the number of full commissions reduced from six to three. The Corporate Parenting Sub Commission could be abolished as its functions will be largely covered by the new Corporate Parenting Board to be established in December 2009. The Petitions Sub Commission meets as and when necessary and may have to be changed in the light of the provisions relating to petitions contained in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It is suggested that a reconfigured scrutiny structure, coupled with carefully selected and focussed scrutiny reviews, would add value to the Council's decision-making processes. It would also enable Members to allocate their scarce time resources to the areas where they could exert the most influence, both within scrutiny and elsewhere.
- 2.11 If a three commission structure were adopted, it is estimated that staffing savings of approximately £55,000 a year could be made. In addition, savings in Special Responsibility Allowances paid to chairs and vice chairs, totalling £33,337 a year, could also be made.
- 2.12 The scrutiny research and training budget of £24,000 is normally underspent and it is felt that a figure of £10,000 would be adequate. That would produce an annual saving of £14,000.
- 2.13 The Corporate Complaints function is also managed within the Scrutiny and Complaints Team. The future of complaints management is being considered as part of the One Derby, One Council transformation programme.
- 2.14 Members are invited to consider the issues raised in this report and decide whether and how to take the matter forward.

**For more information**

**contact:**

**Background papers:**

**List of appendices:**

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Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny models

## Appendix 1

### IMPLICATIONS

#### Financial

6. If these, or similar, proposals are adopted, there is the potential to achieve significant savings of approximately £102,000 a year to contribute to the targets in the Revenue Budget Strategy.

#### Legal

- 2.1 Legislation requires that the Council must have at least one Scrutiny Committee. The Council must also provide for one of its Scrutiny Committees to deal with statutory requirements such as the scrutiny of health bodies, crime and disorder partners and LAA targets, as well as considering Councillor Calls for Action.
- 2.2 The recently passed Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 will add to these requirements. Further guidance and commencement dates are awaited.
- 2.3 A commission which scrutinises children's services must include statutory co-optees representing school governors and faiths.

#### Personnel

3. The reduction in staff resources would be managed through vacancies. The savings cannot be achieved, however, unless the current workload is reduced through a significant reduction in the number of scrutiny commissions.

#### Equalities Impact

4. None directly arising.

#### Corporate Themes and Priorities

5. This report has the potential to link with all of the Corporate Objectives.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Current Scrutiny Configuration**

6 Commissions x 5 meetings a year, plus 1 sub commission x 4 meetings = 34 meetings.  
51 member places

#### **Scrutiny Management Commission (7 members)**

- Scrutiny of Policy, Partnership & Economic Development, and Direct & Internal Services (except Climate Change items) Cabinet portfolios
- Acting as Crime and Disorder Committee
- Scrutiny of matters not allocated elsewhere

#### **Petitions Sub Commission (3 members)**

Consideration of city-wide petitions

#### **Children and Young People Commission (7 members + statutory co-optees)**

Scrutiny of Children & Young People Cabinet portfolio

#### **Corporate Parenting Sub Commission (4 members)**

Scrutiny of the Council's corporate parenting role

#### **Adult Services and Health Commission (7 members)**

- Scrutiny of Adult Services & Health Cabinet portfolio
- Health Scrutiny

#### **Planning and Transportation Commission (7 members)**

Scrutiny of Planning & Transport Cabinet portfolio

#### **Community Commission (8 members)**

Scrutiny of Housing & Public Protection (except Climate Change items), and Leisure & Culture Cabinet portfolios

#### **Climate Change Commission (8 members)**

Scrutiny of parts of Housing & Public Protection and Direct & Internal Services Cabinet portfolios

### **Possible Alternative Scrutiny Model**

3 Commissions x 10 meetings a year = 30 meetings  
36 member places

#### **Partnership and External Scrutiny Commission (12 members)**

- Crime and Disorder
- Health
- LAA partners
- Other external scrutiny
- Scrutiny co-ordination

#### **Executive Scrutiny Commission (12 members + statutory co-optees when children's services are being discussed)**

- Cabinet decisions and forward plan
- Cabinet Member decisions

- Delegated officer executive decisions
- Call-ins

**Policy and Performance Scrutiny Commission (12 members + statutory co-optees when children's services are being discussed)**

- Policy reviews
- Budget and performance scrutiny
- Non-executive scrutiny

Notes

- ⇒ Working groups could be created for specific tasks if necessary.
- ⇒ Facility for special commission for particular Call-for-Action if necessary.
- ⇒ Possible need for segmented agenda on Executive and Policy and Performance Scrutiny Commissions for children's services items.
- ⇒ Petitions to be reviewed in the light of new legislation.

### Reponses from Political Groups and Independent Members

#### 1. Response from Councillor Graves

Thank you for including the Independent Members on this important issue.

I will answer you 4 questions and then make a general statement on Scrutiny as a whole.

**a) Taking into account all their other roles as a councillor, do your Members believe that they currently have sufficient time to make our current scrutiny model effective and one which adds value to decision-making?**

As an independent I could find the time to become involved in scrutiny however I feel that the role of O&S has deteriorated over the years and become less effective.

**b) Do your Members consider that they can sustain commitment to adequate levels of time and energy to scrutiny over the next three years?**

Not applicable to me

**c) Do your Members see advantages and/or disadvantages in moving to a model involving fewer commissions with broader portfolios?**

Yes, I will expand below.

**d) Does your Group have other suggestions to improve and/or modify the operation of overview and scrutiny in the Council? If so, how would those impact on the available officer (and Member) resources?**

Yes, I will expand below.

My belief is that O&S was never funded at anywhere the level it should have been due to Chief Officer view of being 'a necessary evil' and giving a token budget to deal with it. Politicians merely found it irritating that the council had to provide it as handed down by the government. It also gave the back benchers something to do. Having said that a small handful of councillors did try and 'use' the function as it was intended.

So to remove more funding will only prove to deteriorate the function further. With budgets the way they are I will have accept that situation.

As for how O&S should look and after the 'evidence' provided in the 2 reports I would suggest a refreshing change to the structure that was briefly looked at previously. I would prefer a single Super Commission of as many members as wanted to be in it with 1 Chair and a small number of Vice Chairs. The Chair and Vice Chairs could then be the executive who would undertake various duties including heading up Reviews, Crime and Disorder, Petitions, Parenting Sub etc. The meeting will take longer than the present ones but there would be fewer. Members on reviews would be self selecting (and presumably provide more interest) and would provide a more broad subject base for members to get involved in. This solution would also allow the budget and officer support to remain effective.

The biggest opposition to this would be the allowances that members would lose although if O&S is to restrict itself then allowances should follow suit.