



**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

2.1 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.

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

2.3 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	

2.4 The Head of Scrutiny and Complaints (David Romaine) is retiring at the end of the year. In view of the impending Corporate Restructure of 2nd and 3rd 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.

- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 Members are invited to consider the issues raised in this report and decide whether and how to take the matter forward.

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Background papers:	Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices:	Appendix 2 – Scrutiny models

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. 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.

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.