Notice of meeting of

Scrutiny Management Committee

To:	Councillors Kirk (Chair), Blanchard (Vice-Chair) Bradley, Cuthbertson, Fraser, Hill and Waudby I
Date:	Tuesday, 30 May 2006
Time:	5.00 pm
Venue:	Guildhall

A G E N D A

1. **Declarations of Interest**
   At this point in the meeting, Members will be invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

2. **Minutes p1**   (Pages 1 - 6)
   To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2006 and to ratify the recommendation from that part of the meeting which was inquorate.

3. **Public Participation**
   At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the Committee's remit can do so. Anyone who wishes to register or requires further information is requested to contact the Democracy Officer on the contact details listed at the foot of this agenda. The deadline for registering is Friday 26 May at 10.00am.

4. **Introduction to the role of Scrutiny Management Committee for New Members (30 mins)**
   Members will receive a brief presentation which will introduce them to the role of SMC and the changes to its functions since the introduction of the new Constitution.

5. **Possible Topics for Ad Hoc Sub-Committees** (Pages 7 - 16) **(30 mins)**
   This report asks Members to consider
   - a report on the numbers of outstanding scrutiny topics which have been registered but not yet taken forward
   - to make recommendations as to which ones are to be the subject of Ad Hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committees and
   - to consider topics which were being carried out by former Scrutiny Boards which have not finished their investigations.

6. **Children's Health Scrutiny Working Group:** (Pages 17 - 22) **Scoping Exercise (25 mins)**
   This report recommends that diet-related children's health is approved to be added to the list of future scrutiny topics.

7. **Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny** (Pages 23 - 58) **Panel Final Report (20 mins)**
   Members are asked to comment on the final report of the Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel.

8. **SMC Forward Plan 2006 (5 mins)** (Pages 59 - 60)
   This report presents the Forward Plan to September 2006 and asks Members for their comments.

9. **Any other business which the Chair decides is urgent under the Local Government Act 1972**

Democracy Officer:

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For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above.

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Agenda Item 2

City of York Council   Minutes

MEETING   SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DATE   27 MARCH 2006

PRESENT   COUNCILLORS KIRK (Chair), BLANCHARD
                           BRADLEY, CUTHBERTSON and FRASER

IN ATTENDANCE   COUNCILLORS SCOTT AND HYMAN

APOLOGIES   COUNCILLOR HILL

PART A – MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

88.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests
they had in the business on the agenda. No declarations were received.

89.   MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27
                       February 2006 be approved and signed as a
                       correct record subject to the amendment of Minute
                       87 (Constitutional Review Consultation) as follows

                       i)   The deletion of bullet point 8 in the
                       preamble and its replacement with
                       • Support for a Health Scrutiny Committee
                       • Support for the setting up of Joint Committees

                       ii)   In the additional points listed in the table
                       against 'Membership of Scrutiny Bodies' the
                       addition of a note that Cllr Fraser did not support
                       this point.

                       iii)   In resolution i) The comments to SMC being
                       considered as individuals comments rather than
                       SMC's formal response to the Constitutional
                       Review.

90.   PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair reported that there had been no registrations to speak under
the Councils Public Participation Scheme.

91. **TANG HALL AREA ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - UPDATE**

Members considered a report, which advised them of the progress being made to produce the pilot Area Asset Management Plan for Tang Hall and set out proposals for the next steps including the involvement of ward and other members.

Officers updated that progress had not been as quick as had been hoped but there had been a lack of resources in the department. It was reported that there was now sufficient information available for the arrangement of a meeting of the Corporate Asset Management Group at the end of May.

Officers also circulated comments received by email from Cllrs Kind and Potter in which they expressed their extreme disappointment at the lack of progress in relation to this work. They also referred to the need for the Children's Centre at Tang Hall School to be included in the proposals. Councillor Blanchard, as one of the Ward Members, also confirmed that he was unhappy with the lack of progress with this Plan.

Members commented that one of the purposes of the proposed meeting in May was to consider who else should be involved in the consultation but that this had been agreed at a previous meeting of the Committee. They also commented that there appeared to be no details regarding the project management or timescales for the Plan. There was also a need to adopt best practice models for the Area Management Plan.

Members felt that the Tang Hall Asset Management Plan should be considered as a topic for progression, in the new municipal year, by an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel to look at the approach, timetable and resources available for the Plan.

RESOLVED: i) That the contents of the report be noted.

ii) That the Executive Member Resources and the Assistant Director (Head of Property Services) be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the next steps and timetable for the Tang Hall Asset Management Plan.

92. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY BOARD FINAL REPORT ON 'DRUG AND ALCOHOL-RELATED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR'**

Members considered the final report of the Economic Development and Community Safety Scrutiny Board on 'Drug and Alcohol related Anti Social Behaviour'.

Councillor Hyman presented the final report and he thanked the Scrutiny Team for their assistance with work on the topic. He

commented that the Board had all had preconceptions regarding the areas covered but that they now had the relevant facts from the various bodies and there appeared to be more far reaching problems. He confirmed that some retailers were now looking at contributing towards York's CCTV system and linking up with the Council to provide individual cameras. He pointed out that unfortunately there were some areas that were outside the Boards scope e.g. Domestic Violence, effects that drugs can have on individuals and communities and that they could form areas for further investigation.

At this point Councillor Blanchard left the meeting.

Members commented as follows

- When scoping future reports, consideration should be given to time limiting them to 3-6months as 18 months is too long for consideration of a topic.
- Questioned the phrase monitoring city radio links in the report.
- Questioned the recommendation relating to the use of breathalyser machines on licensed premises and as to whether they would have the same calibration as those used by traffic police.
- Questioned how co-optees were chosen and reference to the male dominated board.

> **RESOLVED:** That the Economic Development and Community Safety Scrutiny Board final report on 'Drug and Alcohol-related Anti-Social behaviour' be accepted subject to the following

- Inclusion of an explanation of the city radio link system.
- The need to include a summary at the end of each recommendation showing who would be responsible for the action.
- Preparation of Annex B to include financial and legal obligations together with details of the implications of the recommendations.

93. PROGRESS REPORT FROM RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD

Members considered a report, which updated Members on the recent work of the Resources Scrutiny Board.

Councillor Scott, Chair of Resources Scrutiny Board was in attendance. He indicated that the Board had approved its final report on Sustainability and Social Responsibility in Procurement for inclusion in the corporate procurement strategy and that this was now awaiting the outcome of the resources restructure of the Chief Executives Department. The Board had also received a report, which gave an

update on the recommendations of the scrutiny report on Property Management. He confirmed that, as the Board had had no formal topic, they had concentrated on the budget process and local government finance.

Members queried and commented as follows

- That although breaches and waivers were now to be considered by the Governance Committee there was a need for continuity with Members.
- That Members should continue to register any topics that they wished to be scrutinised.

RESOLVED: i) That the progress report from the Chair of the Resources Scrutiny Board on their recent work be noted.

ii) That Members thanks be conveyed to the Resources Scrutiny Board for all their work.

94. SCRUTINY BUDGET 2005/06 – OUTTURN REPORT

Members received an update report on outturn expenditure of £4,518 on the scrutiny budget for 2005/06 .

Details were also given of the approved budget for 2006/07 of £6,000.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the outturn expenditure on the scrutiny budget for 2005/06 as set out on the expenditure sheet at Annex 1 of the report.

95. SMC FORWARD PLAN 2006/07

Members considered the Scrutiny Management Committee Forward Plan for 2006/07.

Officers updated that the final report of the Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel should be added to the Plan for the May meeting.

The Chair referred to previous discussions regarding the possible inclusion of the Tang Hall Area Management Plan as a scrutiny topic. Local Members were asked to complete a registration form for the inclusion of the Area Management Plan as a topic for consideration by a future Ad Hoc Panel. Officers agreed to email a copy of the registration form to the Local Members concerned.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the inclusion of the final report of the Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel to the Plan for the May meeting, the Forward Plan for 2006/07 be noted.

The meeting was now inquorate and therefore Members made the following recommendation but did not make any decision on the urgent item of business.

96. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair reported that this was to be the last meeting of the Committee attended by Rachel Rushforth, Scrutiny Manager before she left the authority to pursue other interests.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committees thanks be conveyed to Rachel for all her help and support with the Scrutiny Management Committee and to wish her well with her new endeavours.

COUNCILLOR KIRK
CHAIR

The meeting began at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.25pm.

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CITY OF
YORK
COUNCIL

Scrutiny Management Committee

30 May 2006

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Possible Topics for Ad Hoc Sub Committees

Summary

1. This report asks Members to consider a report on the number of outstanding scrutiny topics which have been registered but not yet taken forward. They are asked to make recommendations as to which ones are to be the subject of Ad Hoc Scrutiny Sub-Committees and to consider the membership of any such Sub-Committees. They are also asked to consider topics which were being carried out by former Scrutiny Boards which have not finished their investigations.

Background

2. At present there are 14 outstanding scrutiny topics, i.e. for various reasons, they have not been progressed through the scrutiny process but have also not been ruled out as a potential scrutiny topic for progression at a later date.

3. A list showing the outstanding topics is attached at Annex A

Options

4. These may be progressed by an Ad Hoc Sub Committee, kept pending for progression at a later stage or closed.

5. The following topics from former Scrutiny Boards have not had their investigations completed. The former Chairmen request that Ad Hoc Sub Committees are formed to allow them to finish their work:

   a. Housing Scrutiny Board "Sustainable Street Lighting"
   b. Planning and Transport Scrutiny Board "Reducing Carbon Emissions from York's Housing"
   c. Commercial Services Scrutiny Board "Community Recycling and Re-use in York"
   d. Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Board "Guidance for Sustainable Development"

Analysis

6. There is the potential for 4 Ad Hoc Sub-Committees to be formed, with the possibility of a 5th for urgent topics. Members may wish to see the work of the former Scrutiny Boards continuing, but should bear in mind that this would delay the commencement of any new work.

Implications

7.
- **Financial** there are no known financial implications

- **Human Resources (HR)** there are no known HR implications)

- **Equalities** there are no known Equalities implications

- **Legal** there are no known legal implications

- **Crime and Disorder** there are no known Crime and Disorder implications

- **Information Technology (IT)** There are no known IT implications

- **Other** there are no known other implications

Risk Management

8. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report

Recommendations

9. Members are asked to note the outstanding scrutiny topics and consider how they wish to review these in the future.

10. Members are asked to consider creating Ad Hoc Scrutiny Sub Committees for the uncompleted topics previously under investigation by former Scrutiny Boards. The options are:

  a) To carry on with the four existing topics with target dates for completion

b) To amalgamate these topics into one new Ad Hoc "Sustainability" Sub-Committee with membership to be drawn from the previous Scrutiny Boards (a list of the members is enclosed at Annex B)

11. Members are asked to consider outstanding registered Scrutiny topics and decide which ones should be progressed by new Ad Hoc sub Committees.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Report Approved √ **Date** *18-05-06*

Wards Affected: **All** √

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: List showing the outstanding registered scrutiny topics
Annex B: List of members of former Scrutiny Boards mentioned in item 9

Background papers

None

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Form No.	Topic	Registered by:-	Party	Date registered	Referred to:-	Status/Recommendation	Outstanding topic?
91	Review of Council-owned land in the area of Tang Hall School	Cllr Kind, Cllr Looker, Cllr Potter	Lab	Dec-03	SMC	Resources officers are to meet with ward members June 2006. To be reviewed by SMC July 2006	Yes
101	Age discrimination in Council services	Cllr Potter	Lab	Jul-04		Not progressed to date with agreement of Cllr Potter	Yes
102	Review and evaluation of domiciliary and recuperative care for older people in the York area	Cllr Potter	Lab	Jul-04	Former Social Services & Health Scrutiny Board; Former Housing Scrutiny Board; SMC	Not progressed to date. Could be refered to Health Scrutiny Committee or form cross-cutting Sub-Committee	Yes

109	Suburban shopping centres	Cllr Looker	Lab	Apr-04	Former Econ. Dev. & Community Safety Scrutiny Board	Not progressed at this stage by agreement of the former Board because it was already dealing with a retailing topic and would be taking on a large piece of work with drug and alcohol-related problems	Yes
120	Parking charges in York	Cllr Simpson-Laing	Lab	Apr-05	Former Planning & Transport Scrutiny Board	Could be considered for Sub-Committee	Yes
121	Traffic congestion in York	Cllr Simpson-Laing	Lab	Apr-05	Former Planning & Transport Scrutiny Board	Could be considered for Sub-Committee	Yes
126	To examine services for transition from an education environment to independent living for adults with learning disabilities.	Cllr Hopton	Ind	May-05	Former Social Services and Health Scrutiny Board	Could be referred to Health Scrutiny Board or form cross-cutting Sub-Committee	Yes

127	Role of School Governors	Cllr Kind	Lab	May-05	Former Education Scrutiny Board	Could be referred to Education Scrutiny Committee	Yes
128	Support for heart patients after they leave hospital	Cllr Lancelott	Lib Dem	Jul-05	Former Social Services and Health Scrutiny Board	Could be referred to Education Scrutiny Committee	Yes
129	Local Transport Plan 2	Cllr Simpson-Laing	Lab	Aug-05	Former Planning & Transport Scrutiny Board	Could be considered for Sub-Committee	Yes
130	Podiatry Services	Sally Hutchinson, Age Concern		Aug-05	Former Social Services and Health Scrutiny Board	Could be referred to Health Scrutiny Committee	Yes
135	Highways maintenance procurement process	Cllr Simpson-Laing	Lab	Apr-06	OSMC	Currently undergoing feasibility study	Yes
136	Swimming and Leisure	Cllr Looker	Lab	Apr-06	OSMC	Currently undergoing feasibility study	Yes
137	Public art	Cllr Hogg	Lib Dem	May-06	OSMC	Currently awaiting feasibility study	Yes

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Members of former Scrutiny Boards with uncompleted investigations

Commercial Services Scrutiny Board

Cllr Fairclough
Cllr Jones
Cllr King
Cllr Lancelott
Cllr Livesley (Chair)
Cllr I Waudby (Vice-chair)

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Board

Cllr D'Agorne
Cllr Lancelott (Chair)
Cllr Moore
Cllr Potter
Ccllr Vassie
Cllr B Watson (Vice-chair)
Cllr M Waudby

Housing Scrutiny Board

Cllr Blanchard
Cllr Fairclough (Vice-chair)
Cllr Hill
Cllr Horton
Cllr Jamieson-Ball (Chair)
Cllr Kirk
Cllr Livesley

Planning and Transport Scrutiny Board

Cllr Bartlett
Cllr Hogg
Cllr Jamieson-Ball
Cllr Simpson-Lang
Cllr Smallwood (Vice-chair)
Cllr Vassie (Chair)

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CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

Scrutiny Management Committee   **30 May 2006**

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Children's Health Scrutiny Working Group: Scoping Exercise

Summary

1.   This report recommends that diet-related children's health is approved to be added to the list of future scrutiny topics.

Background

2.   In June 2004, a topic was registered by Cllrs Kind and Jones relating to 'Children's Health: The Role of Leisure, Education and Partnerships with others' (topic reg. form no. 99).

   On 27 June 2005, the Scrutiny Management Committee considered a background briefing by the Director Designate of Children's Services on the proposed topic and resolved that a working group be set up to further scope the topic particularly in relation to Healthy Eating in Schools. The membership of the group is Cllrs Cuthbertson, Bradley and Kind.

Consultation

3.   Between September and December 2005, the group carried out preliminary information-gathering about factors affecting children's health and fitness, in particular diet-related health. The group tried to identify where current data and indicators were available locally, regionally and nationally and where there were gaps are in this data. They also gathered information about local initiatives that promote healthy eating.

Round-table discussion regarding diet-related children's health

4.   On 30 September the group met with Margaret Wilkinson (Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Observatory), Clare Barrowman (Schools Drug Education and Healthy Schools Consultant), Janet Flanagan (Head of Health Improvement, Selby & York PCT), Liz Jones (School Fruit and Veg. Scheme Co-ordinator), Barbara Kistasamy (Client Catering Manager, CYC) and Keith Tillbrook (Catering Manager, North Yorkshire County Caterers).

5.   The main points from the discussion were as follows.

- A lot of data about children's health is not currently being collected and data that is collected is not necessarily reliable. The Public Health Observatory reported that statutory bodies were waiting for guidance from the Department of Health on indicators.
- There is no breakdown of statistics in terms of children's health in the York and Selby areas, although they have very different socio-economic profiles.
- Undernourishment is as much a problem as obesity in deprived areas.
- There is a correlation between low birth-weight babies and health problems in later life. Pre-conceptual care is therefore important.
- There was discussion about how young people are taught about food in secondary schools. Support packages for schools include Healthy Schools Scheme and a Food in Schools toolkit.
- School meals: The lack of uptake of school meals, including free meals, is an issue. There needs to be a range of food on offer in schools. There is a problem with children going to local shops/fast food outlet at lunchtime. In some schools there is a policy where children have to have written permission to go out at lunch-time. School vending machines encourage unhealthy eating
- A lot more is packed in to the school day, making mealtimes shorter and less of an opportunity for socialising whilst eating. Should packed lunches be made available earlier in the morning?
- Breakfast clubs are a good opportunity for children to get a nutritional meal that they might miss out on at home. Clubs have been tried at Burnholme school, but the take-up was low.
- Needs parents to be educated about healthy breakfasts/meals
- Nursery schools/youth service – what are they doing to support healthy eating?

Meeting with Surestart staff

6.   On 14 October the group visited Hob Moor School and met with Alison Walls, Surestart Project Manager and other staff at Surestart.

7.   The main points from the discussion were as follows.

- The children and young women Surestart works with are more likely to be anaemic rather than obese.
- There is a lack of local shops in the area selling fresh produce. Items sold at Tesco Express, Acomb tend to be more expensive than at superstores located outside the local area.
- Parents do not have basic cooking skills and children are often not the first generation that haven't learnt skills. It is cheaper and easier for parents to buy processed food that will fill up the children with calories but may be of little nutritional value.

- At their sessions with parents, Surestart have subtly introduced more fresh fruit and vegetables, less processed foods, and fresh juice rather than juice squash with additives.
- Surestart want to shop on-line more for better choice and cost, rather than having to go through approved suppliers that may not offer nutritional food cost effectively.
- Feasts in the community centres are popular. A fathers group meets weekly and cooking has been a part of this. The young parents group encourages whole families to eat together. There is the opportunity for linking with schools on the work Surestart do relating to healthy eating.

Meeting regarding obesity research

8. Also on 14 October, the group met with Professor Ashley Adamson, Visiting Senior Lecturer, Department of Health Sciences, University of York. Prof. Adamson specialises in research into obesity and is leading a project in the North East (sponsored by the Food Standards Agency) to research the link between dietary intake and obesity in children/young people.

9. The main points from the discussion were as follows.

- There is strong evidence that obesity is increasing in children, that it is linked to morbidity in childhood and that it tracks to adulthood with all the associated problem of adult obesity such as diabetes, cancer, coronary heart disease etc.
- The determinant of obesity is the Body Mass Index (BMI). The rise in obesity has occurred in the last 20 years and has been dramatic.
- Regarding asthma there is no evidence that obesity is a pre-disposing factor but it makes the condition worse.
- All children at school entry are weighed and measured by school nurses. The Department of Health keep this data.
- Health survey for England is a source of useful info

National and regional context

10. The Selby and York Primary Care Trust has published the following facts about obesity:

- Obese people are more likely to suffer from a number of serious chronic diseases, many of which are life limiting.
- Over 30,000 deaths a year are caused by obesity in England alone.
- Obesity in 2-4 year old children has almost doubled [5%-9%] in 10 years [1989-1998]
- Obesity in 6-15 year olds has trebled [5%-16%] in 11 years [1990-2001]
- Obesity in adult women has nearly trebled [8%-23%] in 22 years [1980-2002]

- Obesity in adult men has nearly quadrupled [6%-22%] in 22years [1980-2002]

11. In the Government White Paper 'Choosing Health' it states that the objective for Primary Care Trusts should be to

    - move the balance of the national diet in England towards that recommended by the experts
    - halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010, in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole
    - monitor obesity status among people aged 15 to 75 years, as recorded in GP records
    (2004 Government PSA10a target)

12. The Selby and York Primary Care Trust has developed a Healthy Lifestyles and Obesity Strategy 2005 –2008 which incorporates local initiatives and provides support in tackling the risk factors of the major lifestyle related diseases.

    Local Actions include:
    - Supporting the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme roll out and through Healthy School's Programme support the food in schools initiative
    - Promotion of the 5 A Day campaign
    - Training for professionals to ensure up-to date information given to all community groups
    - Promotion of breastfeeding
    - Training for all health professionals
    - Developing a toolkit for frontline staff for the treatment and management of obesity
    - Recording BMI of patients aged 15-75 on GP registers

Recent Government initiatives

13. Following a review of schools meals, a national audit of schools meals is currently being carried out. A panel set up by the Government to make recommendations about improving school meals has proposed a ban on low-quality foods high in fat, salt and sugar, reformed or reconstituted foods made from "meat slurry" and a further ban on chocolate, crisps, and sugary fizzy drinks from vending machines.

14. The Government has also undertaken to introduce more stringent nutrient-based standards, stipulating the essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals required for school meals in primary schools by no later than 2008 and secondary schools by no later than 2009.

Other issues affecting Children's Health

15. To gain an understanding of the priority to be attached to diet-related children's health issues, the group asked public health experts for their view on whether this was most pressing issue and whether, for instance, alcohol abuse amongst young people or physical fitness should be dealt with more urgently. The Department of Health's Regional Public Health Group for Yorkshire and the Humber confirmed that obesity is top of the regional public health policy agenda, together with teenage pregnancy.

Options

16. In conclusion, the group's scoping work has found that obesity in children is increasing at a rapid rate and the health problems associated with it, such as diabetes, continue into adulthood. The group also found that some of the key data needed to track trends relating to child obesity is not reliable or is only now starting to be gathered. The number of indicators of the health and fitness of children is therefore limited.

17. The group recommends that diet-related children's health is approved as a future scrutiny topic, with the following scope:

- Nutritional aspects of the food consumed by children in York schools, including how new Government standards will be implemented in schools
- The wider educational issues regarding healthy eating, e.g. how parents are engaged in what their children eat
- Best practice and how City of York compares with other local authorities regarding school meals

Implications

18 There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT or other implications at this stage.

Risk Management

19 In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendation

20. Members are recommended to approve diet-related children's health to be added to the list of future scrutiny topics.

Contact details:

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Report Approved | √ | **Date** *18-05-06*

| |

Wards Affected: All | √ |

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes
None
Background Papers
None

Scrutiny Management Committee   **30 May 2006**

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel final report.

Summary

1. Members are asked to comment on the final report of the Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel.

Background

2. The report is attached at Annex 1. It is due to be considered by the Executive on 13 June.

3. SMC has a quality control role in relation to scrutiny reports going forward to the Executive. Any comments made by SMC would be appended as an annex to the report for consideration by the Executive in conjunction with the Board's report.

Implications

4. Financial implications are included in the report at Annex 1. No other implications have been highlighted by the relevant officers.

Risk Management

5. In compliance with the Councils risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

6. Members are asked to comment on the report.

Contact details:

Author:	**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**
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Report Approved √ **Date** *18-05-06*

Wards Affected: **All** √

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Report on 'Inclusive Decision Making'

Background Papers
None

Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel

Final Report March 2006

Chairman's Foreword

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in this important topic. Their help and knowledge have been invaluable. I would particularly like to give a very special 'thank you' to Barbara Boyce and Jules Horsler for their commitment and enthusiasm and to all co-opted members for giving up their valuable time.

We know that some groups of disadvantaged people find it harder to influence the decision-making process than other people. This is unacceptable, and we need to work together to ensure that the council involves need to reach groups in decision making in a manner that is accessible – but above all – equitable. As has been said before; the more inclusive the decision-making, the better the decision-making.

Members of this panel have been visited by the following organisations, and I would like to thank them for their time:

Disabled Persons' Advisory Group
Leeds Involvement Project
York BME Citizens Open Forum
LGBT Forum Steering Group
Inclusive Living Sheffield

I would like to congratulate all involved. We have identified some key recommendations that will enable York to become more inclusive and I look forward to seeing them adopted.

Cllr Paul Blanchard

Glossary of abbreviations used in this report

CYC	City of York Council
BME	Black and minority ethnic
DPAG	Disabled Person's Advisory Group
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MESMAC	Community support service for gay and bisexual men
OPA	Older People's Assembly
YREN	York Racial Equality Network

Summary of Recommendations

1.The council should consult on the formation of an Equalities Advisory Group as discussed in Annex C to consider:

- Whether the remit and membership DPAG could be expanded to include other equality issues.
- How disabled people can be supported to participate in an inclusive and pan-impairment forum in the future if the role of DPAG has been expanded in this way.
- Whether resources could be found to support the participation of community groups in an Equality Advisory Group.
- The Equalities Advisory Group should incorporate the levels and principles of participation detailed in 3.1 – 3.3 of this report and determine how these can be measured.

2.The Council should work to strengthen inter-faith partnerships

- The efforts to develop inter-faith work through the "City of Faiths" initiative and partnerships such as York Churches Together should be supported and encouraged by the council.
- There needs to be clarity about the role, remit, powers and relationships of those involved in partnership bodies.
- Actively involve faith groups in areas of common interest in the Local Strategic Partnership's work.
- Faith groups should be encouraged to participate at Ward Committees.
- Ensure council agendas are accessible to forums such as Churches Together in York and the York branches of the British Humanist Association and the British Secular Society. This would enable them to know what was due to be discussed so they could contribute to the discussions where relevant.

3.The Council should improve communication with need-to-reach groups

- The requirements made of community forums to be inclusive and accountable to the communities they represent.
- The level of resources given to community forums to enable them to be inclusive, accountable and sustainable.

4.The council should encourage the co-option of community representatives onto decision making bodies.

- Provide training to committee / board chairs to enable them to make meetings more welcoming and inclusive. This could include guidance on dealing with co-optees, visitors and members of the public.

- Review and share with co-optees and community groups the guide to how the council runs and its decision-making structures (produced for Councillors).
- There should also be training for co-optees prior to attending meetings.
- Community forum representation from BME communities, young people, disabled people, LGBT communities and older people will be gender balanced. The community issues set out in section 6 of this report should be addressed by the Council in consultation with the relevant groups.

Inclusive Decision Making Scrutiny Panel

1.   Background

1.1   The Older People's Assembly in 2005 asked the Older People's Champion to look at age discrimination in the Council and in particular to address older people's involvement in the council's decision-making process. At the same time consultation for the development of the Pride in our Communities (PIOC) Equality Strategy (2005-8) showed that groups representing people from disadvantaged communities felt that the council's decision-making needed to be more accessible and inclusive. The PIOC therefore identified as a priority to review how community groups participate in decision-making. A Scrutiny Topic was registered by Cllrs Kirk and Potter and Julian Horsler, the Equalities Officer (see Annex A). This Scrutiny Panel (see Annex B) was therefore established with the following remit:

1.2   Objectives

- To establish a base for all sections of the community to become involved in the decision making process.
- To ensure that access to the decision making process is clear, coherent and consistent.
- To feed into the constitutional review with recommendations about future structure of decision making bodies.

1.3   Scope

- To carry out an 'audit' of community input into the decision-making process in York.
- To compare practices in other local authorities and other relevant organisations in the private or community sectors.
- To liaise with community organisations to ascertain their views about the system in York.
- To identify principles against which any changes to community input to decision making can be based.
- To identify improvements which could be made to the structure and process in York to ensure that community involvement is effective and equitable.

2.   How the panel did the review.

2.1   The Scrutiny Panel co-opted a number of community representatives to sit on the panel, and others were invited to contribute to specific discussion topics. These were:
- Lynn Jeffries, member of Include Us In.
- Jack Archer, member of the Older Peoples Assembly and Older Citizens Advocacy York.
- Rita Sanderson, York Racial Equality Network.

- Paul Wordsworth, York Churches Together.
- Fiona Walker, member of York RAP group (organisation of young disabled people) – contributor to discussion on DPAG.
- Mike Higgins, Inclusive Living Sheffield - contributor to discussion on disabled people's involvement.
- Kenny Lieske, MESMAC Yorkshire – contributor to discussion on LGBT Forum.

2.2   The panel held four informal sessions where it examined the principles and levels of participation it would like to underpin its review and proposals. It also invited people to the meetings to provide evidence and arranged visits to projects elsewhere to observe and learn from their practice. Examples include:

- **York BME Citizens Open Forum**
This was held on 9 March 2006 an and approximately 40 people were there with about 70% from ethnic minorities. It was encouraging to see a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds represented. There was a presentation from the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) which outlined their role and responsibilities to BME groups. This was an interesting presentation which highlighted the need for York to be more aware of its growing ethnic diversity, in particular the growing population of immigrants from eastern Europe and its responsibilities to all BME groups.

- **Disabled Persons Advisory Group**
Members attended DPAG as observers on 25 January 2006. It appeared to be well attended but as there were no introductions our observers did not know who many of the attendees were and could see no name cards. The chair was friendly but did not make any concessions e.g. the attendees were not asked if they could hear everyone, nor was anyone asked if they could read the papers clearly. There were no housekeeping rules reminding everyone what to do if the fire alarm went off, or where the disabled toilets were situated.

The meeting was conducted in a manner similar to many other Council meetings and many of the attendees made no contribution to the discussion. It was felt that it could have been more inclusive, for example by going round the table and asking every attendee if they wished to add anything to the debate. The observers were also conscious of the very formal surroundings and wondered if this was an inhibiting factor.

- **Leeds Involvement Project**
Discussions were held with the manager and the coordinator of the mental health service user forums. The project had established a good reputation and attracted considerable funding over the past few years due to consistently supporting the effective involvement of disabled people and carers in a range of forums, reference groups, focus groups,

and partnership boards as requested by public agencies in the city. They worked to agreed principles; such as participants are paid for their time and expertise, and they are given appropriate training prior to involvement to ensure participation is on an equal and fair basis. See also Annex C

- **Yorkshire MESMAC LGBT Forum Steering Group**
MESMAC is one of the oldest and largest sexual health organisations in the country working predominately with Gay men, Bisexual men and men who have sex with men. They work across North and West Yorkshire, with offices in Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, and York.

On February 13th, Jack Archer, Fiona Walker and Lynn Jeffries attended the inaugural LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) Forum meeting, which Yorkshire MESMAC hosted at their York offices.

The meeting was very well attended (the room was filled to capacity) and very well organised. The focus of the meeting was to identify the needs of LGBT people in the York area whilst developing new initiatives for the future.

Areas discussed included:
.   The proposal of a LGBT newsletter that can be circulated and distributed
.   The need and opportunities for representatives of the LGBT Forum to participate on local authority committees and;
.   The development of some form of 'Pride Event' taking place in York during the summer.

By the end of the meeting, a 'social committee' to look at potential social outlets and a newsletter team had been established and a representative from
the LGBT forum was elected to join the ad hoc scrutiny group.

2.3   The panel also sent a questionnaire to community and voluntary groups seeking their views and experiences of the inclusivity and accessibility of the council's decision-making process. 27 questionnaires were returned and their findings discussed at the informal panel sessions.

3.   Principles To Underpin the Review

3.1   The panel considered what level of participation it felt it was concerned with in this review. It looked at the following levels of participation (the most substantial being the "Supporting" and the least being "information".

Supporting	⇨	You help others do what they want – perhaps with a framework of grants, advice and support.
Acting Together	⇨	Not only do different interests decide together but they form a partnership to carry it out.
Deciding Together	⇨	You encourage others to provide some additional ideas and options, and join in deciding the best way forward.
Consultation	⇨	You offer a number of options and listen to the feedback you get.
Information	⇨	The least you can do is tell people what is planned.

3.2   The Panel agreed that all levels of participation may be appropriate in certain circumstances. However the level that this scrutiny project should focus on is "deciding together" – with a vision that the higher the level we can achieve the better. The Panel agreed that 'information' and 'consulting' were important elements but not sufficient on their own to constitute effective involvement – nor were they the focus of this Scrutiny Panel.

3.3   The panel agreed the following principles that they believe should underpin any structures to support inclusion in decision-making. Although all principles were felt to be essential they were ranked in order of importance:

Effective	The participation should be effective – by influencing the decisions the council makes for the better. This is not just a fundamental principle but also the overriding purpose of inclusive decision-making.
Openness and honesty	This principle applies to all those involved in the decision-making (the Council and the community). There must be no hidden agendas or ulterior motives. This is essential if the participation is to based on trust – and hence if it is to be effective.
Accessible and inclusive	The participation process should be accessible to all. This includes ensuring disability access but also that the times, places and publicity for the participation meetings / events are inclusive. The processes should also be imaginative, varied and fun – one size does not fit all.

Good communication	It must be clear to all involved what decisions can be influenced, to what extent, how the decision will be made and what the outcome was and why. This must be done by the Council but also the community groups involved may be better placed to help with communicating outcomes to the community.
Participative	The participation process should encourage involvement and engage participants in a constructive way (not confrontational).
Representative	Community participants should be representative of the diversity of those communities. For example if speaking to disabled people does that include black disabled people, disabled men and women, older and younger disabled people etc.
Accountable	Those involved in the decision-making process should be accountable to the communities / organisations they 'represent'.
Clarity and Transparency	It should be clear from the start what the purpose of the participation is and how it will work. Decisions should be made openly.

4.   Findings

The panel looked at how inclusive the decision-making process is for 7 groups of people whose voice is often not heard. Although the remit could have been much wider it was felt important to focus on the more formal and structural mechanism for consulting with these communities – recognising that this is not and must not be the only involvement activity with these groups.

4.1   Involving Faith Groups

To make involvement of faith communities more effective survey respondents highlighted three key areas:
- Ensuring the decision-making process is transparent – the involvement of faith communities and others in partnership can help to dispel ideas of 'hidden agendas'.
- Widening the inter-faith engagement to non-Christian faith groups.
- Ensuring that faith representatives are accountable to the faith communities.

The panel agreed that there was a need to involve faith communities in the decision-making process. This already exists in areas such as the Children's Services EMAP and Scrutiny Board, the School Organisation

Committee and SACRE. However it felt there was an important contribution to made in the following areas as well:

- Building safer and stronger communities (community cohesion) in partnership with other agencies. There is an important link here with the Local Strategic Partnership and the need to develop a Local Area Agreement. There is already faith representation on the LSP but we may need to consider how this can be widened and strengthened – to involve minority faith groups. This appears to relate to the "acting together" level of participation that was identified in session one of the Scrutiny Panel, recognising the important role faith communities can play in helping to strengthen communities and build bridges between communities.
- Racial and religious harassment is on the rise nationally and faith communities have an important role to play in combating the causes of harassment (intolerance and ignorance) through their community work, and by helping to raise awareness of the racial harassment reporting procedures.

4.2 Involving Older People

Survey respondents agreed that the existing Older People's Assembly (OPA), supported be the Older People's Champion roles appears to be fairly effectively involving older people in the decision-making process.

Its main strengths are:
- Its accountability: officers are elected, co-optees on other committees and forums are expected to report back, involvement from a wide number of older people's organisations.
- Its representativeness: meetings are well attended by men, women, disabled people.
- Its communication: members of OPA value the contribution the champion makes to keeping up to date with the Council's work. The regular newsletter keeps older people informed about its work. It seeks the views from wide numbers of older people on a regular basis (through group's activities and through surveys).

It could however be improved further by:
- Funding the group so it can reach and involve more older people in its activities (especially BME people).
- The Council demonstrating its commitment to involvement of older people by listening more and acting on what they are told.
- More and better feedback for all older people on the results of consultation and involvement – not just to those active in older people's organisations.
- Making the work of scrutiny co-optees more effective.
- Improving engagement with OPA from partner agencies.

The Panel noted that the facility for there to be co-optees can be useful but there are concerns that they may not be really involved in decision-

making as important decisions appeared to have been taken elsewhere beforehand. In some cases there is a lack of clarity about co-optees right to speak. Many decision-making bodies and boards do not have co-optees. Nonetheless co-optees can be useful because it meant that groups received paperwork in advance of meetings and therefore can speak to councillors and lobby – ie it gets you 'inside the system', and helps to get information out to the community. But people don't know who everyone is, don't know rules and how they can speak, where to sit etc.

There are regular newsletters to the community from OPA already which are distributed through a network – to sheltered housing, residential homes etc. However with a paid member of staff (e.g. for 2 days a week) the distribution could be much wider and bring in the numerous luncheon clubs for example, and so they could have a representative on the committee. The funding is not secure enough to enable OPA to recruit to this post currently. There are 5 public meetings a year – the last of these attracting over 70 people.

4.3   Involving BME Communities

The panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses in the current structure for involving people from BME communities:

Strengths
- York BME Citizens Open Forums facilitated by York Racial Equality Network have been operating for 4 years with 20-40 people attending on a regular basis.
- Each forum is based on a theme suggested by the public. Local, regional and national issues are discussed all of which impact on local issues.
- It is valued by BME citizens and groups in the York area – and recognised by CYC and the Commission for Racial Equality.
- It is governed by the Commission for Racial Equality Quality Standards with specific race equality requirements. York Racial Equality Network is the only organisation in York and North Yorkshire that complies with and meets those standards.
- It is a source of specialist knowledge and is independent of the council.
- It has managed to combat some of the issues surrounding the involvement of hard to reach groups.

Weaknesses
- The Forum finds it difficult to get feedback / support from other agencies.

Recognising the presence and success of York BME Citizens Open Forums, it was felt that the confidence of BME citizens to become more

involved in mainstream consultation and involvement still needs much work.

Key issues that need to be addressed if effectiveness of Open Forums to influence Council can be improved are:

- How do officers that attend open forums take the information back to the council? What happens then? Better feedback needed.
- How do people who attend the Open Forums on behalf of a community group feedback to the community group, or pass the views of that group into the forums themselves?
- Need for one body for BME citizens to feed into. This used to be Building Bridges but not clear if this still exists. Need somewhere to feed issues raised at Open Forums into Council and to be given feedback.
- Need to establish confidence with the community that they will be taken seriously.

4.4   Involving Young People

The panel identified the following strengths and weaknesses in the current structure for involving young people:

Strengths
- Large range of organisations.
- Supported by youth service, including a Voice and Influence Co-ordinator.
- Recognised by the council (Young People's Advisory Panel and Champion).
- Citizenship activities for schools in the Guildhall.

Weaknesses
- Lack of representativeness – how are people selected?
- Lack of primary school input.
- Lack of participation by young people.

Although there were felt to be many strengths with the involvement of young people the developments in this area could still be built on further – in particular to improve participation, accessibility and accountability. The Young People's Advisory Panel is working closely with the Children's Trust and the Council to track what work is going on and to propose improvements.

4.5   Involving Disabled People

The questionnaire sent to community groups received its greatest response from disability organisations. There was a wide range of views expressed, some of them contradictory. The main points can be summarised as:

- The meetings can be overly formal and although access in some ways (eg loops, chairing) is very good, in other ways they remain inaccessible to many disabled people – the venue is unsuitable and the reports / presentations are too jargonisitic and complicated.
- The chairing of the meeting is very welcoming and as informal as the rules allow – however disabled people have little say over the agenda or the running of the meeting.
- The meetings are effective for commenting on individual access issues but not for taking a collective overview or approach to disability issues.
- There is sometimes doubt about whether consultation with DPAG is meaningful although this has felt to have improved in recent years.
- Involvement in the group does reflect the diversity of physical and sensory impairments fairly well but not people with learning difficulties and mental health service users. Also there are no young disabled people or disabled people from BME groups.
- The group is on one hand very friendly but on the other it can appear to people attending for the first time that they everyone else has long standing relationships that gives their views more weight.
- Most disabled do not know the group exists or what work it does.
- Participants are involved as individuals not as representatives of organisations of disabled people – and hence their views are not accountable.

The panel identified the following issues in the current structure for involving disabled people through the Disabled Persons Advisory Group (DPAG):
- Is there a clear, accountable process for how to get onto the DPAG and for how feedback from it is to be provided by DPAG members to their constituencies?
- How/why do things get discussed?
- What training do members of DPAG get around disability equality, other diversity and effective consultation issues?
- How can the DPAG work to remove barriers to the involvement of some Disabled People in its work?
- What is the DPAG development plan and system for prioritising its work?
- What is the strategic role of the DPAG? Why does it exist at all – how can it be made more effective if it is to be kept?
- How can the DPAG be promoted more effectively to a diverse range of Disabled People
- How can the focus of the issues considered by the DPAG be broadened?
- What is the decision making process – i.e. how are decisions reached; what happens to decisions/recommendations made by the DPAG; and how does the DPAG know what has happened to its decisions/recommendations?
- Are there terms of reference for the DPAG – if so, do these need reviewing and if not should these be drawn up and agreed?

- How can the DPAG be made more inclusive? There was particular interest in investigating further the role of Centres for Inclusive Living (CILs) and how these can support effective participation of disabled people.

It was agreed that whilst not many disabled people knew about the existence of DPAG it was not necessarily any worse than scrutiny bodies in the council. It was also felt that the papers for DPAG go to a very wide number of groups and maybe it was those groups not informing their members that was more of the problem. The Panel also recognised that disabled people did have a say over the agenda and that the rules were not imposed rigidly.

4.6 Gender

The panel noted the following about the involvement in women in the decision-making process:

- Councillors representation is approximately 2:1 in favour of men but there is a much better balance in the Executive and the Shadow Executive.
- Management hierarchy still predominately men (glass ceiling still exists in the council and the wider city). There are areas where our gender balance in management is very good such as Primary Schools, but also other areas where we could do much better.
- Council needs to set an example.

The one survey to be completed on gender issues questions the merit of seeking to involve women as a specific group. However it does recognise the need for more women officers and councillors who are taking the decisions.

It was agreed that whilst there were still many issues of women's equality that needed to be addressed there also needs to be recognition of the need to manage the perception of positive discrimination. It was felt that it is better to address issues of gender equality.

4.7 Involving the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Communities

The surveys demonstrate a degree of consensus that there is a need for some kind of structure for the involvement of LGB people that at the time didn't exist. However MESMAC have now initiated an LGBT forum which met for the first time in February. The Forum is made up of LGBT people and other stakeholders. The Forum welcomed the idea of an equality panel, giving it a clear mechanism for communication wit the council and other disadvantaged groups.

There was discussion about the need to involve LGBT community as a distinct group in the decision making process. It was agreed that due to the particular concerns they may have about services and policies and that raising these through mainstream decision-making bodies may not be possible (are these safe places for people to be 'out'?) there is a need for a forum for LGBT people. Hence the initiative by MESMAC to develop such a forum was welcomed as offering an opportunity to develop involvement in this area.

4.8 Setting an Example

The Panel noted the importance for the Council to set a good example. We do want to make our decision-making process more accessible and inclusive to people from disadvantaged communities and hence this report considers how they can participate more effectively through community forums. However the Council also employs many decision-makers is senior positions within the Council. A truly 'inclusive' decision-making process would ensure that all sections of the local community are reflected within these posts.

The Panel considered the equality-profile for the top 5% of staff working for the Council. Areas where improvement was needed were identified by looking at the three equality areas where this is currently monitored (race, gender and disability) in turn.

4.8.1 Gender

Whilst almost three quarters of the workforce are women (73%) just over half of the top 5% of paid jobs are held by women (51%).

Of jobs that are graded 'PO' and above almost two-thirds are held by women (62%) but this varies greatly by directorate. So 70% of jobs graded PO and above in Community Services are held by women but only 9% of these jobs are held by women in Commercial Services.

In all cases however this means that women are less likely than men to progress to the higher grades within the Council. Although the Council is amongst the best in this area when compared to other Councils (and is improving) it still needs to improve gender equality at these higher grades.

The figures for recruitment however show that we continue to recruit more women than men. Last year about 6 out of every ten job applicants and 7 out of 10 new recruits were women.

4.8.2   Ethnicity

Just under 1 in 20 of the local population (4.9%) are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. However only 2.8% of the Council workforce (and 2.6% of those on grades PO and above) are from BME groups. Although this would appear to show there is no 'glass ceiling' for BME staff working for the Council,

they continue to be under-represented in the workforce. Some directorates however are doing better than others. So Community Services for example employs 4.2% BME staff.

The ethnic profile for recruitment to jobs within the Council shows that 4.2% of job applicants and 3.5% of new recruits are from BME groups, which whilst still below the percentage for the local population shows that progress is being made in this area but that there is still much work to be done.

4.8.3   Disability

Of all the staff employed by the Council only 2.1% are disabled people. Not only is this considerably below the number of disabled people of working age in the city it has also fallen in the last year. The Council is investigating why this is and what steps it can take to reverse the decline. The Council has however increased the proportion of new recruits who are disabled from 1.3% to 3% in the last year but this is still of course much lower than the proportion of disabled people in the city.

In contrast disabled people working for the authority are successful at reaching higher grades – with 3.6% of staff on grades PO and above being disabled. In Chief Executives 9% of staff on these grades are disabled.

5.   Recommendations

The panel makes the following proposals to improve the inclusiveness and accessibility of the Council's decision making process.

1.The council should consult on the formation of an Equalities Advisory Group as discussed in Annex C to consider:

- Whether the remit and membership DPAG could be expanded to include other equality issues.
- How disabled people can be supported to participate in an inclusive and pan-impairment forum in the future if the role of DPAG has been expanded in this way.
- Whether resources could be found to support the participation of community groups in an Equality Advisory Group.
- The Equalities Advisory Group should incorporate the levels and principles of participation detailed in 3.1 – 3.3 of this report and determine how these can be measured.

2.The Council should work to strengthen inter-faith partnerships

- The efforts to develop inter-faith work through the "City of Faiths" initiative and partnerships such as York Churches Together should be supported and encouraged by the council.
- There needs to be clarity about the role, remit, powers and relationships of those involved in partnership bodies.

- Actively involve faith groups in areas of common interest in the Local Strategic Partnership's work.
- Faith groups should be encouraged to participate at Ward Committees.
- Ensure council agendas are accessible to forums such as Churches Together in York and the York branches of the British Humanist Association and the British Secular Society. This would enable them to know what was due to be discussed so they could contribute to the discussions where relevant.

3.The Council should improve communication with need-to-reach groups

- The requirements made of community forums to be inclusive and accountable to the communities they represent.
- The level of resources given to community forums to enable them to be inclusive, accountable and sustainable.
-

4.The council should encourage the co-option of community representatives onto decision making bodies.

- Provide training to committee / board chairs to enable them to make meetings more welcoming and inclusive. This could include guidance on dealing with co-optees, visitors and members of the public.
- Review and share with co-optees and community groups the guide to how the council runs and its decision-making structures (produced for Councillors).
- There should also be training for co-optees prior to attending meetings.
- Community forum representation from BME communities, young people, disabled people, LGBT communities and older people will be gender balanced. The community issues set out in section 6 of this report should be addressed by the Council in consultation with the relevant groups.

6   Community Issues

BME Communities

The Equalities Advisory would provide a single body for the Open Forum to feed into. This would help give continuity for the forum - issues raised at the forum meetings have somewhere to be raised and a means for regular reports on progress made by the council. However the confidence and capacity of BME community groups will need to be built and supported if the forum is to achieve its full potential for effective participation.

Young People

Given the existence of a Young Persons Advisory Panel it was felt that it would be better placed to consider the participation of young people. However the findings and proposals of this panel should be given to the Advisory Panel for consideration - in particular the proposal for an Equalities Advisory Group to which young people would be invited to contribute towards. The form this contribution and involvement would take is to be decided by the Young People's Advisory Panel and should involve the Schools Council Forum or other involvement mechanisms which are felt placed to support the voice of young people.

Disabled People

The Panel felt that the Disabled People's Advisory Group would benefit from a greater degree of independence from the Council and to be more self-organised. This would mirror the arrangements of the Older People's Assembly which it was felt to have been very effective in giving a strong clear voice to older people in the city in recent years. Any such forum should be pan-impairment and ensure disabled people who attend meetings on behalf of organisations are accountable to those organisations, and maintain good communication with their membership on the work of the disability forum. The development of such a forum would require appropriate support and resources if it were to be achievable and effective.

Any changes to DPAG should ensure the following issues are addressed:
• It should consider more issues of strategy and policy. The focus currently is too much on access issues.
• Many issues appear to have already been made by the time they come to DPAG.
• Can feel impersonal and exclusive. There are not enough young disabled people attending.
• DPAG could try to vary the style of meetings, make them less formal in structure and make them more accessible.
• Move venue (perhaps to the library?)
• Make them more responsive to events.
• Practical responses are needed to suggestions made at the meeting for improvement in how the meeting is run.
• Provide papers which are easier to read.
• Provide papers earlier in advance of meetings.
• Consider how greater control of the agenda can be given to disabled people, possibly through the introduction of a forward plan so individuals and groups could know what was coming up.

The Panel recognises that this would be a major change to the workings of DPAG and as such it is essential that disabled people are consulted on the proposals – both disabled people who attend DPAG and those that currently do not. The aim should be to develop the forum in partnership

with disabled people so it can meet the needs of all disabled people in York.

Gender

There was reluctance to set up a new committee and instead the option of widening the remit of DPAG to include other social inclusion or equality issues was considered. All forums sending representatives to an advisory forum could be required to have a fair gender balance.
Representation on council committees was also discussed and it was felt that the constitutional review should allow for there to be a stated ambition that all committees should have as fair a gender balance as possible. Ultimately however this would be dependent upon political parties achieving a gender balance in their groups.

LGBT Communities

The Panel welcomes and supports MESMAC's initiative to develop an LGBT forum. The Council needs to provide practical and consistent support for this project.

Older People

The Panel recognises the important contribution made by the Older People's Assembly to giving an effective voice to older people. It needs to be sustained in the long term, and recognises that without this support its work is in jeopardy.

SCRUTINY TOPIC REGISTRATION FORM

SUGGESTED TITLE OF TOPIC Inclusive Decision-Making	

ABOUT YOU Please fill in as many of the details as you are able to.

Names of proposers:-

Julian Horsler, Equalities Officer, City of York Council, tel. 551704
Cllr Ruth Potter
Cllr Madeleine Kirk

Are You (delete as applicable)	
• **A Resident of York**	YES
• **A Visitor**	NO
• **A City of York Councillor**	YES
• **A City of York Council Employee**	YES
• **A Representative of a Voluntary Organisation or Charitable Trust** (if YES please tell us the organisations title and your relationship to the organisation below) Older People's Assembly – Older People's Champion (Cllr Potter)	YES
• **Other** (please comment)	

ABOUT YOUR PROPOSED TOPIC
Please write your responses to as many of the questions below as you are able to.

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT?

It is widely recognised that some groups of disadvantaged people find it harder to influence the decision-making process than other people. For example elderly people can find that they do not know who to contact in the Council, a disabled person may find that a meeting is inaccessible to them, a member of a black or minority ethnic community that information is not available in their language, a single parent that there is no child care provision, or that a gay and lesbian person doesn't feel able to talk openly in a public meeting.

Over the years a number of groups and forums have arisen which seek to give these communities a voice – and an influence on decision-making. Currently the most prominent are the Older People's Assembly, the Disabled Persons Advisory Group, the York Racial Equality Network Open Forums and the Youth Forum. Each of these has a different way of interfacing with the decision-making process. There is also an Older People's Champion amongst the elected members, with responsibility of raising older people's issues within the council.

These groups all work in different ways, and have their own strengths and weaknesses. However it is unlikely that none of them could be made more effective.

DO YOU KNOW IF THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT TO OTHER PEOPLE? IF SO, WHO AND WHY?

Consultation for the purpose of developing the Council's Equality Strategy heard many times that the Council needs to listen to what people are saying and enable them to influence the Council's planning and decisions. This is something the Council already tries to do but could do better.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SCRUTINY OF THIS TOPIC MIGHT CHANGE, DO OR ACHIEVE?

Establish a basis for future involvement of disadvantaged groups in decision making that is equitable, consistent and accessible. The timing of this project could enable it to inform the outcome of the Constitutional review. The ultimate purpose of the topic would be to benefit both the Council and residents by helping ensure that its decisions (and hence services) are more appropriate and responsive to the needs of York's diverse community and hence more effective and valued. The more inclusive the decision-making the better the decision-making – "nothing about us without us" as the disability movement says.

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS ABOUT THE APPROACH SCRUTINY MEMBERS MIGHT TAKE
TO YOUR SUGGESTED TOPIC?

1. Establish key 'markers' for effective inclusion in the decision making process and review
    existing involvement mechanisms against these. This can be a desk-top exercise initially but
    also a basis for involvement of the mechanisms involved. Officers undertake a survey of
    similar local authorities and how they involve disadvantaged groups, and with how much
    effectiveness.
2. Invite submissions from community groups about how the views of disadvantaged
    communities can be best taken account of in the decision-making process. To seek specific
    examples of how the current system may have failed to include the views of disadvantaged
    groups and suggestions as to what improvements / changes could the Council make to its
    current practice? This could include considering what services or facilities could enhance
    participation and involvement.
3. Officers report to Scrutiny Cmte on main issues mentioned in the submissions and the review
    and key issues for further scrutiny are identified.
4. Scrutiny Cmte invite community representatives to discuss the issues in person at an
    accessible and inclusive community event.
5. Final report with recommendations.

WOULD YOU BE HAPPY TO TALK TO SCRUTINY MEMBERS ABOUT YOUR
PROPOSED TOPIC AT FORMAL MEETINGS?

Yes

PLEASE ENCLOSE ANY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS OR OTHER INFORMATION YOU
FEEL MIGHT BE USEFUL BACKGROUND TO THE SUBMISSION OF THIS TOPIC FOR
CONSIDERATION.

Participants in Scrutiny Review of Inclusive Decision Making

Members of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Paul Blanchard (Chair)
Jack Archer
Cllr Keith Aspden
Cllr Ian Cuthbertson
Lynn Jeffries
Cllr Madeleine Kirk
Cllr Ruth Potter
Rita Sanderson
Paul Wordsworth

Other contributors

Mike Higgins
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Officers of City of York Council

Barbara Boyce
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Julian Horsler

Visit to Leeds involvement project

Cllr Ian Cuthbertson and Julian Horsler visited Leeds Involvement project (LIP) on 13th February. This project is a service user led organisation which exists as a charity and is a separate entity from Leeds City Council. It started life with significant funds from the residue of a Leeds Health Action Zone and subsequent funding had been received from several sources. Ongoing 'core' funding (50% from Leeds City Council Social Services and 50% from the 5 Leeds PCTs) of about £120k is boosted to some £345k by further grants from the Lottery Fund and from Comic Relief. The staff has grown to some 12 full-time staff including the Project Manager.

The Project Manager's brief has been to secure funding at the 'core' level and to supplement it by gaining further funding on a project by project basis. Generally, the core funding itself and each further tranche of funding are all underpinned by SLAs which involve both the funder and the recipient(s). The effect of pump-priming the operation by using the residue of Health Action Zone funds appears to have helped in this.

The project is based on promoting the Social Model of Disability, in which the client is viewed as an 'expert user' in the process of identifying and removing barriers. A holistic approach to health is promoted, which also recognises a Social Model of Health where external factors such as income, environment, discrimination can affect health. A diverse range of service users and carers is involved, prioritising those who face additional discrimination or disadvantage. Innovative approaches are developed in a 'beyond the tick box' culture which employs reference groups, training, user-led research and evaluation, new facilitation methods, community outreach and other methods to find new ways helping people participate.

With the 7 Leeds PPIFs (1 for each PCT, 1 for Mental Health and 1 for the Acute Trust) there are places on the Health and Well-Being OSC, the Service Users and Carers Alliance and Leeds Voice. The Service Users and Careers Alliance feeds into planning at citywide strategic level (eg Scrutiny Boards, Health Inequalities Modernisation Team) and works on issues which come from the members (eg changes to eligibility criteria). Modernisation Teams are inter-agency teams which focus on Mental Health and on Older People's services. Comic Relief funding supports a further Disabled People and Diversity Project, involving an LGBT Disabled People Group and a BME Disabled People's Consultation Group. There is a Locality Development Scheme which helps users of community care services to participate more fully in service planning and to respond to initiatives from service providers.

User-led research focuses on how support services can better meet the needs of LGB and Mental Health service users; there is a project with CSCI to involve service users in Performance Assessment of Local Authority Social Services Departments. Advice and information is also provided to services users and carers on good practice, methods and opportunities; feedback from this is used in strategic planning of involvement in Health and Social Services. The project has a quarterly newsletter, a website

and a developing library.

The project has been closely involved in developing local enhancements to recent statutory processes for involvement in health alongside PALS, ICAS and the PPIFs, negotiating support for these with a local 'network provider' (in this case, Leeds CC working with LIP).

Possible creation of Equality Advisory Group

Establish an Equalities Advisory Group to consider issues relevant to race, disability, gender, sexuality and age equality. Members of the group will be:

- Elected Members nominated at annual council meeting.
- Elected members who are Champions for a disadvantaged community (eg Young Persons' Champion, Older People's Champion etc).
- 2 delegated representatives from each of 5 community forums.

The community forums would be:

- YREN Open Forum
- Older People's Assembly
- Disability Forum (eg revised and independent DPAG)
- LGBT Forum
- Youth Forum (or other such forum as advised by YPAG)

Some of these forums already exist and these proposals if adopted would not mean any changes to the way these forums currently function, their liaison with other groups / sections of the Council or planned development- the proposals are additional to existing arrangements.

Discussions would be needed with each forum to establish their ability to run meetings, communicate with members and the wider community and send representatives to the EAG – in some circumstances it may be that additional ring-fenced grants may be required to facilitate this. Forums will be asked to organise an agreed number of meetings a year and to elect 2 representatives to the EAG. The representatives will be responsible for articulating the views of the community forum at the EAG and for reporting back to the forum the discussions and decisions taken at EAG. The forum will then be responsible for publicising to its members and the wider community the results of its involvement in the EAG and to encourage wider and representative attendance at the forums. The representatives nominated by each forum must be a man and a woman to ensure there is a fair gender balance on the EAG. The representatives will be offered training to ensure they can effectively participate in the meetings.

How the EAG would work:

The EAG would meet every two months. It would be a public meeting to which anyone could attend and participate in discussions. However only the formal representatives of the community forums and the elected members can vote.

There should be a named Executive Member (who has equality or inclusion in their portfolio) on the group along with the elected member equality champions (such as Older People's Champion and Young People's Champion).

The agenda would be based on a forward plan agreed at each meeting based upon suggestions made by the various community forums, elected members and council officers. The forward plan would be circulated to all forums so they had the chance to discuss the issues due to be raised in advance of the EAG so representatives could contribute to EAG discussions informed in advance of the views of the forum. Meetings would seek to be as informal as possible and to use innovative / creative ways to consider topics and reach decisions.

The purpose of the EAG would be to discuss issues of equality at a strategic level in a number of areas:

Employment
- how the council could make its workforce better reflect the diversity of the local population and to evaluate progress.
Service delivery
  – council strategies and plans for making services more inclusive and accessible and to evaluate progress.
  – issues about services raised by forums that have significant implications for the wider community.
Community involvement
  – how the council can effectively involve people from disadvantaged communities in consultation to shape and evaluate services.
  – effective partnership working that involves people from all communities.
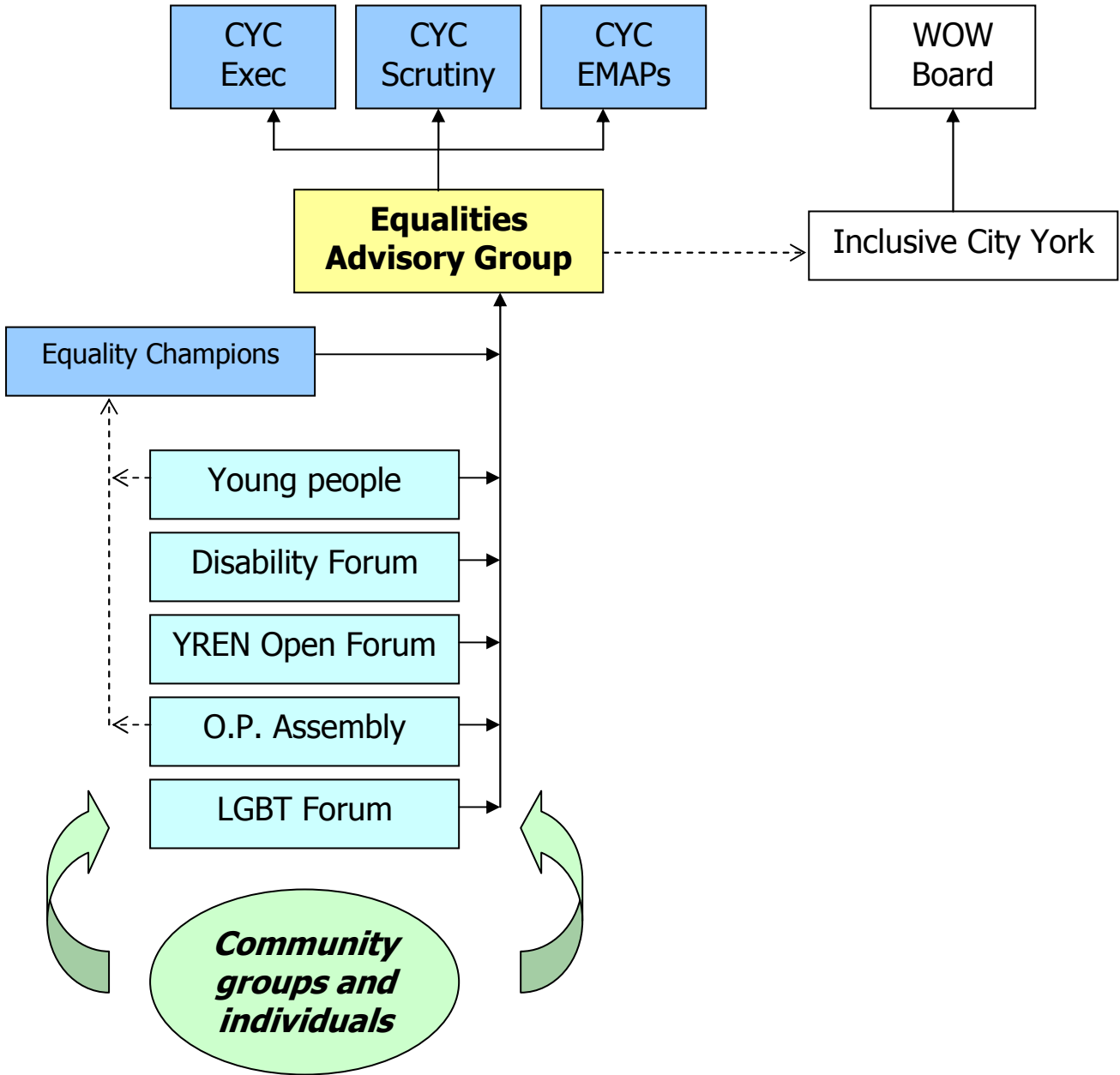
Examples of what would be discussed:
- *Employment Equality Improvement Plan* – each year HR produce a plan that reports on the equality profile of the workforce and actions it intends to take to improve this. This plan could come to the EAG so forums know how well CYC is doing and comment upon the actions proposed.
- *Local Development Framework* – this will include a vision as to what the city should look like and the principles that should underpin future planning decisions. The EAG could usefully discuss what these principles should be. They could also comment on how communities should be involved in planning and development decisions in the future.

- *Community Safety Plan* – the group could give its views as to what the priorities should be for the CSP and how communities can be further consulted and involved.
- *Council Plan* – comment on the council's priorities and help identify those projects over the next year that may have significant equality implications.
- *Benefit Claims* – after a community forum hears that people are reporting delays and difficulties with council benefit claims an officer attends the next meeting to explain the problems and how these will be rectified.
- *Planning Brief* – a community forum is concerned that a planning brief for an industrial development ignores the needs of a neighbouring BME community. This is raised at EAG and officer attends to hear the concerns.
- *Information needs of young people* – a group of young people carry out research that appears to show that young disabled people are not receiving the information they need about services they are entitled to. This is raised at EAG and officers are asked to develop a plan to address the problem.

Examples of what would not be discussed:
- *Complaints about individual officers or services* (unless there is concern about wider implications or there have been lots of similar complaints). These can be dealt with using the council's complaints procedure, by referring the individual to the relevant section, or by using other established channels.
- *Individual access concerns raised by a disabled person*. The issue will be raised with the relevant officer who will be asked to respond. If however the same problem consistently occurs then it may be discussed at a future meeting. Plans for new developments (building, road crossing etc) will be sent to disability organisations for comment.

| CYC Exec | CYC Scrutiny | CYC EMAPs | | WOW Board |

Equalities Advisory Group - - - - -> Inclusive City York

Equality Champions

Young people

Disability Forum

YREN Open Forum

O.P. Assembly

LGBT Forum

Community groups and individuals

Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel

Implications of the Recommendations

	Recommendation	Financial Implications for CYC	Legal, HR, equalities or other implications for CYC	Action required by
1	**The council should consult on the formation of an Equalities Advisory Group as discussed in Annex C to consider:** • Whether the remit and membership of DPAG could be expanded to include other equality issues. • How disabled people can be supported to participate in an inclusive and pan-impairment forum in the future if the role of DPAG has been expanded in this way. • Whether resources could be found to support the participation of community groups in an Equalities Advisory Group. • The Equalities Advisory Group should incorporate the levels and principles of participation detailed in 3.1 – 3.3 of this report and determine how these can be measured.	Full financial implications will not be known until the consultation is complete. The expansion of the role of DPAG and Equalities may require resources in addition to existing budgets.		

2	**The Council should work to strengthen inter-faith partnerships** • The efforts to develop inter-faith work through the "City of Faiths" initiative and partnerships such as York Churches Together should be supported and encouraged by the council. • There needs to be clarity about the role, remit, powers and relationships of those involved in partnership bodies. • Actively involve faith groups in areas of common interest in the Local Strategic Partnership's work. • Faith groups should be encouraged to participate at Ward Committees. • Send council agendas to forums such as Churches Together in York and the York branches of the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society. This would enable them to know what was due to be discussed so they could contribute to the discussions where relevant.	No major financial implications. Any additional cost of sending Council agendas to faith groups will be contained within existing budgets.		

3	**The Council should improve communication with need to reach groups** • Community forums should be inclusive and accountable to the communities they represent. • Resources should be given to community forums to enable them to be inclusive, accountable and sustainable. • The appropriate level of resources should be ascertained by consultation with the community groups involved.	The level of resources required will not be known until the consultation is complete. However, there is currently no budget to provide resources for community forums.		
4	**The council should encourage the effective co-option of community representatives onto decision making bodies.** • Provide training to committee / board chairs to enable them to make meetings more welcoming and inclusive. This could include guidance on dealing with co-optees, visitors and members of the public. • Review and share with co-optees	No major financial implications. One off costs of providing training will be contained within existing budgets.		

	and community groups the guide to how the council runs and its decision-making structures (produced for Councillors). • There should also be training for co-optees prior to attending meetings. • Community forum representation from BME communities, young people, disabled people, LGBT communities and older people will be gender balanced. The community issues set out in section 6 of this report should be addressed by the Council in consultation with the relevant groups.			

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
FORWARD PLAN MAY 2006

May 06	20 mins	Introduction to the role of OSMC for new members		Presentation
	30 mins	List of possible topics to be taken up by ad-hoc panels	Report	To decide future workplan
	25 mins	Children's Health Working Group: Scoping report	Report	Scoping Report
	20 mins	Inclusive Decision Making Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel – final report	Report	Final Report
June 06	20 mins	Draft Scrutiny Annual Review 2005/6 for approval	Report	Annual report
	20 mins	Scrutiny Budget 2006/07: Update report		
	25 mins	Education Scrutiny Board: Final report on Extended Schools	Report	Final report
	25 mins	Commercial Services Scrutiny Board: Final report on 'Community Recycling and Re-use in York'	Report	Will depend on decision of May SMC
	25 mins	Housing Scrutiny Board: Final report on 'Reducing Carbon Emissions from York's Housing'	Report	Will depend on decision of May SMC
	25 mins	Feasibility reports on 3 new scrutiny topics		
July 06		Update on City Centre Retailing scrutiny review		

		Progress with implementing the recommendations of previous scrutiny reviews	Report and annexes	6 monthly report
	30 mins	Cllr Macdonald and Neil Hindhaugh re Tang Hall Area Asset Management Plan	Report and verbal update	Requested at March meeting. Phillip Callow is to meet ward members at in June. To decide after this when it comes back to Scrutiny.
Aug 06		NO MEETING		
Sept 06	20 mins	Review of recommendations of previous scrutiny reports	Report	6 monthly report
	20 mins	Progress report on Health Scrutiny Committee	Report	Written report from chair – every 3 months
	20 mins	Progress report on Education Scrutiny Committee	Report	Written report from chair – every 3 months