

Scrutiny Management Committee

26 March 2007

Report of the Head of Civic Democratic and Legal Services

Update on Improving Electronic Management Processes for Scrutiny

Summary

1. This report provides an update on the IT processes being put in place to manage scrutiny reviews since reporting last to Members in October 2006. This report deals specifically with the developments which have been taking place in relation to establishing an electronic scrutiny forward plan and tracking progress on registered scrutiny topics generally.

Background

2. At the meeting in October 2006 Members agreed the eligibility criteria for topics proposed for review and a process for managing reviews. Since then a number of new templates have been introduced by scrutiny team to standardise the presentation of information in reports to Members and the public.

Consultation

3. Officers have consulted with the providers of the new Committee Management System and work has now been completed to allow Members to register topics electronically via the intranet. Officers are now in the process of creating an electronic scrutiny forward plan which will work in a very different way to that of the Council forward plan.

Options

4. This is an information report at this stage to keep Members up to date with the progress being made in line with previous reports to Members regarding the management of the scrutiny process.

Analysis

5. The intention behind creating a Scrutiny Forward Plan is to provide a single method for accessing up to date information on all scrutiny topics. It will enable Members, officers and the public to access information on registered topics together with ongoing/completed scrutiny reviews. It will provide a

method for producing quarterly reports to this Committee and will allow Members to see:

- The reasons behind a decision not to proceed to review a registered topic.
 - The stage at which any ongoing reviews are at
 - The recommendations made when a review is completed
6. The Scrutiny Forward Plan will show which officer is responsible for each review, and clearly define the work in progress. It will tie into the 'Report Database' facility on the new Committee Management System which prompts officers to write the right type of report at the right time and within the legal deadlines.
7. The final stage for providing a complete picture on any given scrutiny review will be to complete work on the 'Implementation Tracking' facility of the new Committee Management System. This will allow information to feed into the quarterly reports and provide an update on the implementation of approved recommendations.

Corporate Objectives

8. The aim in creating this Scrutiny forward Plan is to ensure that scrutiny working processes are transparent and that information is easily accessible to all. As such, it will contribute to improving our organisational effectiveness.

Implications

9. There are no Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT or other implications. It should be noted that the cost for additional work currently being undertaken by the Committee Management System providers to adapt the system for scrutiny purposes is being absorbed as part of the original contract cost.

Risk Management

10. The risks associated with not establishing a complete framework of working practices for the scrutiny function will be potentially detrimental of the service with regard to the delivery of reviews and the transparency of the service provided.

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to note:
- the introduction of a Scrutiny Forward Plan for scrutiny reviews.
 - Ongoing work to tie in the 'Report Database' and 'Implementation Tracking' facilities, already available as part of the wider Committee Management System

Reason:

To provide a full and complete method of accessing information in relation to the scrutiny function.

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Report Approved

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report