Scrutiny Management Committee   **23 October 2006**

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

WORK PLANNING AND PROCESS MANAGEMENT FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS

Summary

1. This report sets out the work undertaken on establishing eligibility criteria and processes for managing scrutiny reviews, since reporting last to Members in July 2006.

Background

2. At the meeting in July 2006, Members received a report setting out early initial proposals for introducing criteria, a database for monitoring purposes and establishing a procedural process for managing reviews. Further work has now been undertaken, culminating in the preparation of the following:

    • Eligibility Criteria for reviews [Annex A];
    • A proposed process for applying the criteria [Annex A];
    • Process for managing reviews, stage by stage [Annex B];
    • A built database

Consultation

3. Discussions have continued to take place within the Scrutiny team, over the summer, to establish an approach to work planning, to help the team fulfill its role within available resources.

4. Responses from a network of scrutiny contacts in other Local Authorities were evaluated and the proposals for criteria reflect working practices in some of those authorities.

5. The Performance & Improvements team have been consulted upon and contributed to the work on developing effective criteria and an appropriate system for application;

6. A qualified IT developer has been engaged to produce a database for monitoring and business management requirements, to an agreed specification. Scrutiny Officers are currently testing the database.

Options

7. Members comments are sought on the proposed eligibility criteria, suggested process for applying it and on the process for managing reviews. Members have the option to support all as drafted, propose amendments or not to introduce any of these processes.

Analysis

8. In business terms, it would be advisable to at least establish some agreed working practices for the scrutiny function with a view to improving the service provided.

Corporate Priorities

9. The aims in creating this work management process for scrutiny fit with the Council's overall corporate priorities for improving its organizational efficiency.

Implications

10. There are no known implications in relation to the following at this stage of the preparatory work other than those relating to information technology. A qualified IT developer has been engaged to design the database for monitoring of scrutiny information. The developer is familiar with the Council's IT systems and processes, having been engaged by several other Council departments on specific projects. IT&T have been informed about this arrangement and raised no objections. Costs for the developer will be met from within existing budgets.

- **Finance**
- **Human Resources (HR)**
- **Equalities**
- **Legal**
- **Crime and Disorder**
- **Property**
- **Other**

Risk Management

11. The risks associated with not establishing an agreed framework and some working practices for the scrutiny function will be to

the continuing detriment of the service with regard to the delivery of reviews and the continuity of service provided.

Recommendations

12. Members are asked to consider the attached Annexes and approve the proposed eligibility criteria and management process for scrutiny reviews.

Reason:

To establish some agreed processes within which the scrutiny function can operate.

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Report Approved ✓ **Date** *12.10..06*

Specialist Implications Officer(s)
None

Wards Affected: **All** √

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers
Report to Scrutiny Management Committee – 24 July 2006

Annexes
Annex A – Eligibility Criteria & Process
Annex B – Scrutiny Management Process