

Scrutiny Committee – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009

## 10. Overview Commissions

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### Purpose of the Report

To consider the re-establishment of the following Overview Commissions:

- Economic Vitality and Environment Overview Commission
- Well Managed, cost effective services Overview Commission
- Safe sustainable communities and health and well-being Overview Commission

### Action Required

For Members to consider the future of Overview Commissions.

### Background

The constitution states the following:

### Scrutiny Reviews

*'In addition to being able to 'Call-in' decisions, the Overview and Scrutiny function shall conduct reviews into identified areas of Council Services and their performance. It may also investigate the operation of outside agencies as they impact on the District. This work will be co-ordinated through the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme.*

*The Overview and Scrutiny function also takes an overview of levels of performance across the authority in accordance with the authority's performance management framework.*

### Overview Commissions

*The Council will establish three Overview Commissions:*

- *Economic Vitality and Environment Overview Commission*
- *Well Managed, cost effective services Overview Commission*
- *Safe sustainable communities and health and well-being Overview Commission*

*All non-Executive members will have the opportunity to have a seat on one of the Commissions, according to their areas of interest and knowledge. Seats to be allocated in accordance with the party groups' representation on the Council, ensuring that every non-Executive member is allocated a place on one of the Commissions.*

*The Overview Commissions will undertake reviews on a 'Task and Finish' basis as directed by the Scrutiny Committee. The Scrutiny Committee will receive the final reports of the Overview Commissions along with regular updates.*

*The Overview Commissions will be encouraged to use various review methods and to engage the wider community wherever possible. Relevant co-optees may be invited to*

*participate in a Commission, bearing in mind the potential contribution of residents and partners.*

*The Commissions will meet informally and are not subject to the Access to Information Rules. As task and finish groups they will be able to meet and take evidence in public but this will not be a requirement. It will be for each Commission to decide its own working arrangements that best meet the needs of a particular review.*

*The work of the Scrutiny Committee and the Overview Commissions will be managed by an annual Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. This will be approved and monitored by the Scrutiny Committee and will be drawn up in consultation with all elected members (including the Executive), Management Board, Joint Area Committees and the wider community. This will ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme accurately reflects Corporate Priorities along with area and community priorities. The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme will be reported to each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, which will allow for amendments to be made to the Programme, including new items added, as agreed by the Committee. The Programme will be reported to Full Council annually as part of the Annual Scrutiny report'.*

*(Ref: Part 4 – Rules of Procedure, page 4-60-4-61)*

## **Report**

At present no commissions are being undertaken or are planned for the Work Programme 2009/10. For Scrutiny to work, Members need to give thought to the commissions they would like to undertake in the forthcoming year ensuring they meet the criteria below. If it does not satisfy this criteria Members need to establish the specific information required to consider taking forward a commission.

- Be issue led rather than process led
- Enable the voice and concerns of the public
- Lead and own the Scrutiny process on behalf of the public
- Undertake strategic reviews of corporate policies, plans and budgets
- Co-ordinate reviews of policy and service performance in line with strategic objectives
- Drive improvement in services

## **Possible Commissions**

Members are requested to consider the following possible commissions:

To establish a commission that looks at the budget, inescapable commitments and challenges to be included on the Work Programme for October 2009.

At the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2009 Members considered a report on Revenue Budget 2009/10 Medium Term Financial Plan and Revised Capital Programme and agreed that a commission should be established next year to consider the Capital Programme and in particular to look more closely at the bids.