

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 5 MAY 2006

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

FUTURE STRUCTURE OF SCRUTINY

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the background and process to be followed in relation to any proposals to change the existing structure of scrutiny.

Background

2. Members will be aware that the Scrutiny Reference Group and the Chairmen of Scrutiny committees have been discussing the role of scrutiny and how it might be improved. This, together with changes in the departmental structures within the Council (the introduction of a Children and Young People's Service and Adult Social Care Service) suggests that a review of the Scrutiny structure may be timely.

Scrutiny Green Paper

3. The Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 1 March considered a 'Green Paper' by the Chief Executive "Getting the best out of Scrutiny". A copy of the Green Paper is attached as Appendix A. The Commission noted the contents of the Green Paper and asked for the paper to be referred to the Party Groups for discussions with a view to considering the outcome of such discussions at this meeting.

Discussions at the Meeting of Scrutiny Reference Group and Chairmen

4. The Green Paper was discussed at a meeting of the Scrutiny Reference Group and Scrutiny Chairmen on 24 March. Arising from these discussions changes to the Green paper were suggested. A copy of the Green Paper revised in accordance with these suggestions is attached as Appendix B. For ease of reference the document has been annotated to highlight the changes made. A further meeting of the Reference Group and Chairmen is planned for 3 May and the outcome of those discussions will be tabled at the meeting.

Discussions within Party Groups

5. As stated earlier, the original Green Paper was referred to the Party Groups with a view to any comments/views being reported to the Commission. At the time of writing this report meetings of Party Groups have yet to take place. Any comments/views emerging from these meetings be tabled at the Commission's meeting.

Process for agreeing changes

6. The process for agreeing changes to the scrutiny structure is as follows:

5 May	Scrutiny Commission to consider and set out possible options.
8 May	Constitution Committee to consider all views put forward and determine recommendations to the Council.
24 May	County Council to agree changes to Scrutiny Structure and any consequential changes to the Constitution.

Recommendations

7. The Commission is asked to consider and make recommendations on any proposed changes to the scrutiny structure.

Equal Opportunities Implications

Nil.

Circulation under Sensitive Issues Procedure

Nil.

Background Paper

Scrutiny Green Paper – 'Getting the Best out of Scrutiny' – attached as Appendix A.

Revisions to the Green Paper proposed by the Scrutiny Reference Group and Scrutiny Chairmen – attached as Appendix B.

Officer to contact

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