

## **REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

### **ANNUAL REPORT ON BEHALF OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Constitution requires that Overview and Scrutiny Committees should submit an Annual Report to the Council (or the Scrutiny Commission in a single report on their behalf) on their workings. The report may make recommendations about future work programmes and changes in working methods.

#### **Activities undertaken in 2006/07**

2. The Council has received a number of position statements through the course of the year outlining the activities of scrutiny bodies. In view of this, this Annual report highlights the key developments and achievements in relation to each Scrutiny Committee.

#### **Scrutiny Structures**

3. The current structure was put in place at the Annual meeting of the County Council in May 2006. At that time it was recognised that member involvement and leadership would be crucial to ensuring that the process focuses on what matters to the public and users of current services. To some extent that has been achieved and is demonstrated in the attached annual report. More needs to be done and to that end Jessica Crowe, Executive Director of the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Steve Nicklen of the Local Government Leadership Centre have been invited following discussion with the Group Leaders to assist in a review of the scrutiny process, and to identifying areas of improvement.

#### **Training of Members**

4. The County Council has recognised for some time that the success and credibility of the scrutiny process depends to a large extent on how well members engage in the process and use and develop skills and its Member Learning and Development Strategy has recognised this. In particular it recognises members need to develop their skills in the following areas:
  - researching and analysing issues
  - effectively questioning witnesses
  - being community orientated and involving other bodies;
  - drawing together sensible and well argued conclusions and recommendations;
  - working together without acting in a political way.

5. Further work on training and support for scrutiny members linked to the review referred to in paragraph 3 above will be an important issue in the coming year.

**(Motion to be moved**

**That the information contained in the report of the Scrutiny Commission on the activities and future development of Scrutiny be noted.)**

**Dr M. O'Callaghan  
Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission**

### **Background Papers**

Annual Report submitted to the Scrutiny Commission on 20 June 2007  
(attached).