

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

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| 1. MEETING: | Overview and Scrutiny Management Board |
| 2. DATE: | 24 June 2011 |
| 3. TITLE: | Review of Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements - Update |
| 4. DIRECTORATES: | Chief Executive's All Wards |

5. SUMMARY

The report details progress to date in implementing the recommendations of the review of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in Rotherham.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT OSMB:

- a. comments on the action plan attached as Appendix A.**

7. PROPOSALS AND DETAIL

7.1 As part of its 2010/11 work programme, the former Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee set up a review group to examine the role and function of scrutiny in Rotherham in light of the changing local government landscape. The review and recommendations were agreed in full at the Council meeting of April 20 2011, with a view to implementing the arrangements from May 2011.

7.2 With very few exceptions, Overview and Scrutiny is seen to be a valuable part of the governance arrangements of the Council and has widespread support from both Members (Executive and non-Executive) and officers. However, there was a strong view that scrutiny needs to be different both in approach and its arrangements. It was agreed that this should be achieved through:

- Council agreeing a shared understanding of the role and function of Overview and Scrutiny in Rotherham;
- A greater focus on those areas where scrutiny can make the greatest impact;
- A greater emphasis on advance planning of scrutiny's work programme to enable scrutiny to look at borough-wide priorities and examine key issues, with clear links to corporate processes and decision-making cycles;
- An improved dialogue between Scrutiny, the Cabinet and Strategic Leadership Team about respective roles and responsibilities;
- Ensuring that scrutiny can respond to major service and structural changes e.g. NHS reforms, Localism Bill and the emerging transparency/self-regulation agendas, focusing outwardly and not just on the Council;
- Building on what works- scrutiny reviews are widely recognised as having impact and adding organisational value but future work should be more focussed and timely;
- Responding to financial, staffing and other resource constraints; leaner structures, with fewer panel meetings;
- Ensuring that scrutiny reflects and articulates the public voice;
- Supporting members to undertake this 'new' scrutiny confidently and effectively through the Member Development Programme

7.3 Following the reviews approval by Council, an action plan has been developed to outline how the review recommendations are to be implemented (attached as Appendix A). The actions fall into the following broad categories:

- Constitutional amendments (Including terms of reference and role definitions)
- Overview and scrutiny arrangements (structures)
- Work planning and co-ordination
- Member development and awareness raising
- Communication and accessibility
- Co-optee and stakeholder involvement

The plan proposes how each action is to be addressed; estimated timescales and responsible officer.

Member's views are sought on the action plan.

8. FINANCE

It is anticipated that the changes to scrutiny structures arising from the review will lead to greater efficiencies in the use of officer resources, fewer formal meetings and a reduction in the associated production and distributions costs for agendas. Direct officer support to the Scrutiny Members can be met through existing staffing resources located in Scrutiny Services.

Training and development costs will be prioritised through the Member Training and Development Panel and met through Scrutiny Services and Member Development Budgets.

9. RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

It has been agreed that the effectiveness of these arrangements are reviewed in 12 months to judge if they are fit for purpose.

The Local Government landscape has changed beyond recognition since 2010. Like other areas of the Council, scrutiny needs to demonstrate relevance and impact but in the context of fewer resources. If scrutiny does not respond to this agenda and change its approach and arrangements, it will undermine its capacity to provide value for money and undertake effective scrutiny both within the Council and externally

10. POLICY AND PERFORMANCE AGENDA IMPLICATIONS

see review

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS AND CONSULTATION

The role and function of overview and scrutiny in Rotherham: future arrangements – Cabinet 6 April 2011

Contact: *Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser, direct line: (01709) 822765*
e-mail: caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny and Policy Manager direct line (01709) 822769
email: deborah.fellowes@rotherham.gov.uk