

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Date: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006  
Subject: Scrutiny Report Format  
Responsible Officer: Director of People, Performance and Policy  
Contact Officer: Lynne McAdam  
Portfolio Holder: Communications, Partnership and Human Resources  
Key Decision: No  
Status: Public

### **Section 1: Summary**

This report updates the Overview and Scrutiny committee on the outcome of the working group set up to consider the format of reports to scrutiny

### **Decision Required**

To agree the recommendation of the working group that:

- the current standardised report format is helpful and should continue to be used as this ensures all of the appropriate information is included
- this standard format should be used to enable officers to explain the implications of the information they are considering rather than followed in a mechanical way
- a note should be sent to all officers responsible for submitting reports to scrutiny committees requesting a more considered approach to the use of the standard format.
- the appropriateness of this arrangement be considered in 12 months time

### **Reason for report**

Concerns were raised through a reference from the Environment and Economy sub committee regarding the quality of the format of reports presented to scrutiny. This report updates members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee on the outcome of the working group set up to investigate this.

## **Benefits**

Acceptance of the decision from the working group will improve the quality of reports prepared for scrutiny.

## **Cost of Proposals**

There are no costs associated with this report.

## **Risks**

There are no risks associated with this report.

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

The committee will miss an opportunity to improve the quality of reports presented to it.

## **Section 2: Report**

### Brief History

At its meeting in September, the Environment and Economy sub committee raised concerns about the content of a report presented for its consideration. In particular the sub committee expressed concern about the use of technical language and suggested that more background information and context would enable them to understand such technical issues. The committee also suggested that the format of reports they receive might need to reflect the differing purposes between cabinet and scrutiny. With this in mind a reference was made to the Overview and Scrutiny committee, which agreed to establish a working party to examine the most suitable format for reports to Overview and Scrutiny committee and the sub committees.

This working group, comprising Cllrs Versallion and Blann, met 'virtually' and agreed that:

- the current standardised report format is helpful and should continue to be used as this ensures all of the appropriate information is included
- this standard format should be used to enable officers to explain the implications of the information they are considering rather than followed in a mechanical way

- a note should be sent to all officers responsible for submitting reports to scrutiny committees requesting a more considered approach to the use of the standard format.
- the appropriateness of this arrangement be considered in 12 months time

#### Options considered

None

#### Consultation

None

#### Financial Implications

There are none specific to this report

#### Legal Implications

The effective use of a standard report format can ensure that all appropriate issues have been considered by the report author and that decisions made by councillors are thus appropriately informed.

#### Equalities Impact

There are none specific to this report

#### Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

There are none specific to this report.

### **Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents**

None.