

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 25th 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.