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REPORT TO:	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	7 FEBRUARY 2005	CATEGORY:
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINTS:	ANDREA McCASKIE (EXT.5831)/ SALLY KNIGHT (EXT. 5728)	
SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF POLICY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	

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## **1.0 Purpose Of Report**

- 1.1 To explain the background to the current review of policy and decision making by the Council's three policy Committees, along with emerging proposals to improve the effectiveness of these arrangements.

## **2.0 Detail**

### **Background to the Review**

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 required all Councils to revise their political management arrangements to make decision-making more open, efficient and accountable and in May 2002, the Council formally adopted 'alternative arrangements' (based on a streamlined Committee system).
- 2.2 At the same time, Members also agreed an Action Plan (prepared by the Overview Committee) for addressing issues raised during a trial of the new arrangements. A number of recommendations in this Plan concerned decision making by policy Committees.
- 2.3 In September 2003, the Overview Committee invited the Environmental and Development Services Committee to take part in a pilot project designed to:
- review the extent to which decision making might be 'streamlined' further
  - develop proposals to enable the Committee to perform a more strategic, policy orientated role

## **The 'Pilot Project'**

- 2.4 A Working Panel consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environmental and Development Services Committee together with a member of the Conservative Group was set up to manage the project. After the first meeting, the Panel was joined by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Development Control Committee in view of the potential areas of common interest.
- 2.5 The Panel explored with officers a number of areas including:
- Committee workloads
  - Procedures relating to Members questions and reports
  - The operation of the current scheme of delegation
  - The development of a 'work programme' which would give the Committee the time and the space to focus on planning for the future, policy development and performance management
- 2.6 The outcome of this work was reported to the Environmental and Development Services Committee in April of last year. A copy of the report is attached at Annexe A.
- 2.7 The Committee approved the report and commended the proposals to Council for approval (Minute Number EDS/86 refers).

## **Project 'Roll out'**

- 2.8 The project has since been rolled out to the Housing and Community Services Committee and the Finance and Management Committee with reports scheduled for the 3 and 15 February respectively.
- 2.9 The later reports include an additional recommendation relating to the extension of the remit of the Member Working Panels to cover the further development of Committee work programmes.
- 2.10 Outcome from the project will be reported to the Overview Committee in due course (in the context of the Constitution Action Plan).

## **3.0 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Non arising directly from this report