Reviewing the Format of Overview and Scrutiny Reports

The Peer Review report makes suggestions regarding the format and content of our Scrutiny review reports. The relevant extract of the Peer Review states:

"With the external focus, it is important to consider who the audience may be of the final report, particularly in cases where the issues are of interest to the media and public. Currently a standard committee report is used to contain the final output report following a scrutiny review. This does not make it easy for the public to understand the issue and pick up the issues; also it does not do justice to the work done. ***It is suggested that an alternative format template is developed which can be used by officers preparing final reports that is both simple, clear and contains pictures.*** *Many examples exist on the Centre for Public Scrutiny reports database, it is suggested that the Council may want to look at the final report of the Canals Task Group produced by Lancaster City Council, which provides a good example."*

This document is produced in accordance with the Council's new design guidelines. In terms of report content and layout, this is likely to be dependent on the subject of the review and the target audience. The areas that are likely to be included are:

- Foreword from the Chairman or leading Member(s) for the review;
- Introduction;
- Summary of Recommendations;
- Terms of Reference;
- Members involved in the review (and others such as co-optees and expert witnesses);
- Timetable of Meetings, including meeting dates, who gave evidence and the issues discussed;
- Details of any site visits;
- Documentary evidence considered;
- Status of the Report;
- Background & Context;
- Findings;
- Conclusions;
- Appendices.

The use of images and/or graphics was recommended in the Peer Review report and approved by the Committee. Members also stated the need for review reports not to be too lengthy. The involvement of the Communications Team, to ensure reports are written in an appropriate way for the target audience was also approved.