
REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	20TH OCTOBER 2009	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	PAUL SPENCER (01283 595722) paul.spencer@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	PEER REVIEW REPORT	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: N/A

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Committee formally accepts the Overview and Scrutiny Peer Review report.
- 1.2 That the Committee approves the associated Action Plan and considers feedback from the Scrutiny Focus Session in agreeing proposals to address recommendations within the Peer Review report.
- 1.3 That the Committee makes recommendations to the Council on any consequential revisions that are required to the Constitution.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the Peer Review report and associated Action Plan, which contains a number of recommendations to enhance Overview and Scrutiny at South Derbyshire. These documents will have been discussed in detail at the Scrutiny Focus event earlier in the day.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Members will recall the decision to undertake an external Peer Review of our Overview and Scrutiny function. This was carried out by James Doble of Cherwell District Council, at no cost other than minimal expenses. The Review comprised the submission of documents, initial lines of enquiry and on-site discussions with a number of Members and Officers. Mr. Doble attended the Committee's meeting in May, to observe proceedings and give initial feedback.
- 3.2 It was hoped that the final review report would be received in time to be considered prior to the summer, but regrettably it was somewhat delayed. However, the final report is positive and confirms the good progress that the Committee has made in undertaking Overview and Scrutiny at South Derbyshire. A copy of the Review report is attached at Annexe 'A'.
- 3.3 The document has been considered by Officers and an Action Plan drafted, to respond to some suggestions and recommendations arising from the Peer Review. A copy of the Action Plan is attached at Annexe 'B'.

- 3.4 A Scrutiny Focus Session will be held prior to this meeting, to give Members the opportunity to consider in detail the Review document, the Action Plan and specific proposals arising from it. The Committee is now asked to consider the following areas.

Format of Overview and Scrutiny Review Reports

- 3.5 The report makes recommendations about the format of review reports and ensuring they are tailored to the target audience. To date, review reports have generally been submitted in a committee format, to the appropriate policy committee and in some cases, feedback has also been provided to the appropriate organisation e.g. on the broadband and health-related reviews.
- 3.6 The Review report recommends that the Council adopts a reporting style such as that used by Lancaster City Council in its Canals Task Group Report, which will be circulated with the documents for the Focus Session. A suggested template, using the Council's design guidelines has also been prepared and is attached at Annexe 'C'. A number of other sample review reports will be circulated at the Focus Session. The Committee is asked to consider how future review reports should be presented and how they are tailored to meet the needs of the target audience for each review.

Work Programme and Corporate Priorities

- 3.6 This is covered by two of the Action Plan headings. The first aspect concerns how Overview and Scrutiny seeks input from others on potential review areas for its work programme. The second relates to prioritising the suggested review areas against our corporate priorities.
- 3.7 To secure wide input to the work programme, consultation could take place with policy committees and other stakeholders. Raising Scrutiny's profile at area forums, at the Parish Liaison Meeting and seeking public input via the media are other opportunities. The County-wide Liaison Group also provides an opportunity to look at scrutiny work elsewhere in Derbyshire and if appropriate to contribute to other Council's reviews or have joint reviews on issues of common concern. Further consideration of the work programme will take place later in the Meeting.
- 3.8 To assist with prioritising the work programme, the scoping document has been updated, to seek information on relevant corporate priorities. A draft document is attached at Annexe 'D'. Also attached at Annexe 'E' is a draft scoring matrix, to assess potential review areas against corporate priorities. The Committee is asked to consider feedback from the Focus Session and whether to adopt these documents.

Call In Checklist

- 3.9 The Constitution includes a 'Call-in' Procedure as part of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules. The Review report suggests we also establish a checklist or protocol for Call-in. This has been researched and an example discussed at the Focus Session. Members are asked to consider whether to adopt such a checklist.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny, the Councillor Call for Action and Excluded Matters

- 3.10 The Peer Review report makes reference to two new areas of scrutiny work, recommending that the Council amends its Constitution to allow for Crime

and Disorder Reduction Scrutiny and the Councillor Call for Action. The introduction of a checklist or flowchart is also suggested, to ensure that other avenues are explored before a Councillor Call for Action is initiated. A further amendment concerns matters 'excluded' from consideration by Overview and Scrutiny, to comply with an Order made by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

- 3.11 This subject will have been discussed at the Focus Session and feedback will be provided at the meeting. Members are asked to consider this aspect of the Peer Review report and determine the way that the Council will approach Crime and Disorder scrutiny and the Councillor Call for Action, together with the requirements on 'excluded' areas for scrutiny. Dependent on the outcome of the Focus Session, a draft update to the Constitution may be circulated for Members' consideration. Any amendments to the Council's Constitution can only be determined by the Full Council.

Task Group Working

- 3.12 Finally, recommendations are made about Task Group working. The review report recognises the approach taken to date with a lead Member being nominated to work with a lead officer, to progress reviews between meetings, reporting back their findings and recommendations.
- 3.13 The Review report suggests that task group working offers the opportunity to carry out scrutiny away from the formal committee structure, involving a greater number of councillors and without the need for formally constituted meetings. Members' views are sought on this recommendation and whether any changes should be made to the working arrangements at this time, or be kept under review, if a suitable review area would lend itself to such task group working.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 Any changes to the Council's Constitution are a matter that must be referred to the Council Meeting for determination.

6.0 Background Papers

- 6.1 Peer Review Report.