

**Review of the Work of Overview and Scrutiny**

**Purpose**

- 1 To advise the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee of topics recommended by the select committees for inclusion in a legacy report for consideration by the new Council post May 2013 elections.

**Background**

- 2 As a new unitary council in 2009, Wiltshire Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements were agreed for "day one" following consultation during transition and input from an external national advisor.
- 3 These were revised last May with little change to the structure apart from the creation of a new Management Committee to take overall responsibility for the function and its working relationship with the Cabinet. However most significantly a new style and approach was adopted at the wish of elected members and the extended leadership team based on constructive early engagement, a focus on supporting the development of policy linked to the business plan, and seeking positive outcomes for customers. The current overview and scrutiny work programme devised following discussions with the Council's executive and partners reflects this approach which has resulted in a more effective and worthwhile function for all those involved. Scrutiny officer resources within democratic services were also aligned to support delivery of the programme.
- 4 With Council elections in May, the Management Committee has asked that each of the select committees produce a brief "end of term" style report in order to highlight some of the good work done. The report is also intended to provide the opportunity for the select committees to review their respective parts of the current work programme and recommend ongoing pieces of work for possible inclusion in the overview and scrutiny work programme of the new Council.
- 5 The select committees had been planning for this situation and had sought final reports from many of their task groups for consideration at the last meetings of the select committees. As a number of these are focused on major change and improvement projects aligned to the long term business and financial plans of the Council then it is no surprise that there are

recommendations for overview and scrutiny work to continue in these areas as much will span the election period.

### **Key Activities and Achievements**

- 6 Within the reports of each of the select committees, recent key activities and achievements in their respective areas are highlighted. These are drawn out and listed in Appendix A to this report. In addition, this includes similar reporting in respect of the corporate activities which are the direct responsibility of the Management Committee.

### **Ongoing work**

- 7 Also extracted from the reports is a list of activities and reviews which the select committees consider are important to include as ongoing pieces of work in any new overview and scrutiny work programme. These are shown in Appendix B and again include relevant Management Committee responsibilities. Every effort has been made to bring reviews to a conclusion in time for the end of the current Council but, as indicated earlier, some things remain ongoing due to the significance or long-term nature of the topic.
- 8 The select committees have tried to kept this list to a minimum as they are aware that the Management Committee will need to be mindful to leave space and capacity for those leading the function after the election to develop their own work programme based on issues resulting from public views expressed during the election period and also following early engagement with any new executive.

### **Financial and Environmental Implications**

- 9 There are no direct implications although the scrutiny reviews of service policy and delivery will cover such implications as part of the process. Officers providing information to the overview and scrutiny function do so as part of their wider corporate responsibilities to governance and decision-making of the authority. The reconstituted Management Committee will be mindful in developing its work programme of the member and officer capacity to delivery it.

### **Next Steps**

- 10 The members of the Management Committee need to give guidance on what should be included from the attached appendices in a final legacy report to be written by the Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Following the elections this will then be made available to the new Management Committee, appointed by Council on 14 May. Its first meeting is scheduled for 23 May when the chairman and vice-chairman will be elected from among the appointed members. Direction will then be given to the select

committees when they first meet over the initial development of the new work programme. An element of dialogue will be naturally occur between the Management Committee and select committees and through consultation with the executive, partners and customers over the following cycle of meetings before finalising the plan.

### **Recommendations**

- 11 To thank all those members, partner organisations and officers who have positively contributed to the work of the select committees and in the effective delivery of the overview and scrutiny work programme
- 12 To acknowledge that the content of the report demonstrates the significant contribution that overview and scrutiny is now making to open and honest decision-making and to the overall good governance of the authority.
- 12 To ask the Management Committee to review the topics listed in Appendix B and determine what should be included in its legacy report for the overview and scrutiny work programme of the new Council.
- 13 To note the next steps described in paragraph 10.

**Paul Kelly**

**Scrutiny Manager (and Designated Scrutiny Officer)**

Contact details: 01225 713049 [paul.kelly@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.kelly@wiltshire.gov.uk)