Wiltshire County Council   **Agenda Item No.**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
1 November 2007

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Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements for One Council Transition - Paper for Consultation

Executive Summary

1   The County Council's bid for a unitary council for Wiltshire has been supported by Government. Transitional governance arrangements are needed to plan for the new Council in April 2009. These will include overview and scrutiny arrangements in partnership with the district councils.

2   Outline arrangements were reported to the Management Committee and full Council, and included in the response to the Department for Communities and Local Government. They were also discussed informally with scrutiny officers from the district councils.

3   This paper now provides more detail on the outline proposals for wider consultation. It is intended that all 5 councils will play a significant part in developing and operating the arrangements.

4   The proposals include a high profile "Towards One Council" Scrutiny Task Group of the Management Committee with appointed member representatives from the district councils with full voting rights. It will hold the Transitional Cabinet to public account and co-ordinate wider member engagement. The Task Group will appoint small groups and individual members from across the 5 councils at the workstream project level.

5   Overview and Scrutiny activities will continue within the 5 councils but it would be sensible for the outcome of reviews relevant to transition to be reported to the Task Group.

6   The report highlights the importance of developing overview and scrutiny arrangements that will fit well with the other elements of the transitional governance structure. There are significant benefits of all 5 councils working together within the arrangements, particularly in respect of increasing member capacity and pooling knowledge and resources.

7   A period of discussion and consultation is underway with initial decisions to approve the arrangements to be taken by the Management Committee on 1 November, subject to the views received.