

AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT ON DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 An update on progress on the action plan resulting from the Audit Commission report on democratic arrangements was considered at the last meeting of the Committee. It was resolved that a further progress report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

2. PROGRESS ON ACTION POINTS

2.1 The last report to the Committee set out the work that had been undertaken in respect of all recommendations. The two outstanding matters related to senior officer time spent on serving the democratic process and a review of the scrutiny committee structure. This report provides an update on these issues.

Recommendation 1

Assess and review the amount of senior officer time spent on serving the current democratic arrangements and whether that currently provides value for money.

2.2 Senior Officers were asked to collate the amount of time spent attending meeting within the current democratic arrangements during the cycle from 4th November 2008 to Council on 15th December 2008. The information is contained within Appendix 1 to the report.

Recommendation 3

Review the current scrutiny committee structure and clearly identify the remit of each committee in order to reduce duplication of activity and review. Including:

- **ensure that performance information is reported to the most relevant committee; and**
- **that all committees have put in place work programme for the coming municipal year.**

2.3 At its meeting on 9th July 2008 the Cabinet resolved that

“...In the light of the adoption of the new Corporate Plan, Cabinet is minded therefore to consider recommending to Council a system where five Overview and Scrutiny Committees mirror instead the five agreed Corporate Objectives in order to allow those committees to play a real part in delivering the

Council's agreed agenda.

However, Cabinet realises that this is an issue that will need substantial consultation and debate with all those concerned and therefore agrees to review the position with the object of taking new proposals, with detailed terms of reference, to the appropriate Council to take effect from the next Council AGM."

2.4 Cabinet will shortly consider a report on the committee structure and once the final future structure for overview and scrutiny committees is agreed, Officers will put in place arrangements to ensure that performance information is reported to the relevant committee.

2.5 All scrutiny committees have agreed work programmes for 2008/9.

3 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial and staffing implications.

4. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no local Member support implications.

5. LOCAL AGENDA 21 STATEMENT

5.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications.

6. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no planning implications.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equal opportunity implications.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no community safety implications.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no human rights implications.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 There are no background papers under the Access to Information Act.

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 That this report be noted.

Senior Officer time spent servicing the democratic process

4th November 2008 to 15th December 2008

Chief Executive	25 hours.30 minutes
Corporate Services	91 hours
Children's Services	42 hours 30 minutes
Adult Social Services	50 hours 30 minutes
Finance	69 hours 50 minutes
Regeneration	64 hours 50 minutes
Law HR and Asset Management	58 hours
Technical Services	62hours 30 minutes