

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Overview And Scrutiny Coordinating Group

Date of Committee 30 January 2008

Report Title Annual Reports to Council

Summary Elected members have sought guidance on the appropriate line of questioning for Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and portfolio-holders when presenting their respective annual reports. This report suggests the approach to be taken.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) N/A
- Other Elected Members Cllr Richard Grant
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal Sarah Duxbury
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority

Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee Leaders Liaison Group

To Council

To Cabinet

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

Agenda No

Overview And Scrutiny Coordinating Group - 30 January 2008.

Annual Reports to Council Protocol

Report of the Strategic Director of Performance & Development

Recommendation

- (1) That the Group comments on the proposed approach.
- (2) That the protocols with/without amendment are forwarded to Leaders Liaison Group for consideration.

Introduction

1. Some confusion has arisen at full council meetings over the appropriate nature of the questions put by elected members to the chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees when presenting their annual reports. The key issue is that questions are addressed to the chairs effectively asking what action the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have taken to implement their recommendations or what action has been taken to implement their recommendations.
2. Both types of questions are more appropriate to be addressed by the relevant portfolio holder as he/she is accountable for implementing the recommendations of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee once accepted by the Cabinet or explaining why action is not being taken, or a recommendation of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee has not been accepted.

Proposed Protocol

3. Generally elected members may expect Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to
 - Explain the reasons why they have undertaken particular reviews
 - What the findings of the review were
 - The rationale for making particular recommendations

- Any response they have received from key stakeholders to the recommendations
 - What the next steps for the committee is i.e. when they are expecting any progress reports.
4. In circumstances where an Overview and Scrutiny Committee has recently received a progress report on action taken then the Chair of the Committee may be able to give an overview of progress and whether sufficient progress is being made. However progress on implementation of recommendations and the detail of that is primarily a matter for portfolio holders.
5. Generally elected members should expect portfolio-holders to
- Say whether or not the recommendations of a particular review has been supported by the Cabinet
 - If the recommendations are supported – what action is being taken, what the timescale for such action is and what progress has been made to date, reasons for any delay in implementing those proposals etc.
 - If a recommendation has not been supported by the Cabinet then the portfolio-holder should be able to explain why that was the case and whether any alternative action is proposed and the timescale for that alternative action.
6. One practical measure which may help would be to schedule the annual reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees **before** the portfolio holders report on the agenda of Council so that any questions which are more appropriate for a portfolio holder can be answered when the portfolio-holder presents his/her annual report. Thereby ensuring that the elected member receives an answer from the most appropriate person at the meeting.
- 7.

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28 December 2007