

SCRUTINY CONSULTATION

6/06 - **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY:** The Scrutiny Officer delivered a presentation which provided a brief update on recent developments in relation to Overview and Scrutiny and changes to the remits of the Commissions. He explained that the present remit and structure of the Commissions was introduced in 2000 and that improvements to date had concentrated on processes and procedures rather than the structure. He stated that developments had taken place since then that only a review of the Scrutiny Commissions could address. In relation to these developments he added that the use of resources had been identified with the Scrutiny Officer attending 40-50 meetings per year. The Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) had also concluded that scrutiny was not working effectively; the Commissions had focussed predominantly on scrutinising particular decisions or raising local ward concerns; and there had been few examples of fundamental policy development or performance improvement. A review of the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions had also been identified in the review of Overview and Scrutiny. Due to the difficulties experienced with the Audit Committee and the corporate roles of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Commission, the remit of this Commission was considered an issue. In relation to the implications of the remit of the three Commissions, the Scrutiny Officer reported that the Council Resources Commission would be given formal corporate focus and that two Panels, each consisting of six Members and which it was anticipated would be chaired by the Chair of the parent Commission, would undertake issues in relation to Governance and Corporate Performance. The Council's services would be then divided between the other two Commissions and be renamed the Community and Partners Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Organisation Improvement and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Commission. They would also be give the opportunity to consider CPA weakness areas, namely, partnership working and organisational improvement. It was anticipated that each of the Panels would require Members to undergo focused training tailored for the Panels' respective specific functions.

The Chair then invited Members' questions in relation to the presentation. Members questioned the way in which the review of Overview and Scrutiny would address comments made during the last CPA assessment, the need to pay regard to recent guidance about the establishment of the Audit Committees and the reporting arrangements for the new Panels. It was noted that a review of the new arrangements would follow after an period of 12 months.

Councillor Lightfoot then asked about the arrangements for Chairing the Panels and Commission. The Commission then discussed the proposed chairmanships of the Governance and Corporate Performance Panels. It was unanimously **agreed** that the revised option 1a, which set out the proposed structure of the Overview and Scrutiny function, should be approved.

In relation to the preferred Chairmanships of the Governance and Corporate Performance Panels it was moved and seconded that these should be drawn from

different political groupings and, on a vote being taken, four Members voted for the motion, four against and there was one abstention. The Chair then exercised a casting vote against the tabled motion. The motion therefore fell and it was **agreed** that the view of the Commission was that the chairmanship of the Governance Panel and Corporate Performance Panel should be drawn from the same political group and that the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Commission would also chair the Governance Panel and Corporate Performance Panel.

(5.35 pm - 6.07 pm)