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Gary Ridley Acting Chief Executive

22nd December 2009

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you notice that a meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)** will be held in the **4TH FLOOR COMMITTEE ROOM, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **MONDAY 8th JANUARY 2009 AT 4.00PM.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence;
2. To confirm the minutes of the meetings on 2nd October 2008, 29th October 2008, 5th November 2008, 13th November 2008, 19th November 2008, 26th November 2008, 27th November 2008 and 11th December 2008;
3. Transitional Process Review - Presentation by the Policy and Partnerships Manager at Wear Valley District Council on the transitional arrangements and the direction of travel;
4. To consider the draft report of the Transitional Process review (report to follow)

Yours faithfully

Acting Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Anderson, Bowser, Mr Brady, Mrs. Cowing, Mr Davison (co-optees), Councillors Mrs. Jopling, Mrs. Lee, Lethbridge, Murphy, Mrs. Seabury and V. Shuttleworth.

Chair: Councillor V. Shuttleworth
Deputy Chair: Councillor Murphy

TO: All other Members of the Council for information

Management Team

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

2ND OCTOBER 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V Shuttleworth (Chair) Councillors Anderson, Mrs Lee, Lethbridge and Wilson
APOLOGIES	Councillors Jopling
ADVISERS	R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager and J. Hodgson, Scrutiny Support Officer

52. TRANSITIONAL PROCESS REVIEW - PRESENTATION BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, MR. NEIL HARRISON

The Chair welcomed the Leader of Wear Valley District Council to the meeting. The Leader had prepared a verbal presentation for the Committee which outlined what possible opportunities, risks and issues might arise for WVDC during the transitional process to unitary status. HR, resources, financial, communication and service delivery were areas discussed during the presentation.

The Committee thanked the Leader for providing his own perspective on the transitional arrangements.

53. TO DISCUSS THE RECENT WVDC COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

As part of the transitional process review the Scrutiny Support Officer gave the Committee a paper with findings of a recent Wear Valley District Council communications survey (August 2008). The committee considered the findings of the survey and reflected on the information to support their forthcoming interview with the Organisational Improvement Manager, responsible for communications at WVDC.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 5:20pm

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

29th OCTOBER 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V Shuttleworth (Chair) Councillor Anderson, Mr. Davison, Mrs. Cowen (co-optees), Mrs. Jopling, Murphy,
APOLOGIES	Councillor Mrs. Lee
ADVISERS	R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager and J. Hodgson, Scrutiny Support Officer

54. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

The Chair called for nominations for the vacant position of Deputy Chair of the Committee. Seconded by Councillor Anderson, Councillor Mrs Jopling nominated Councillor Murphy. There being no further nominations, Councillor Murphy was duly appointed Deputy Chair of the Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that Councillor Murphy be appointed Deputy Chair of the Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

55. TRANSITIONAL PROCESS REVIEW – INTERVIEW WITH THE ORGANISATION IMPROVEMENT MANAGER

The chair welcomed Mr. Davison and Mrs. Cowing as co-opted members onto the Committee for the duration of the review.

The Chair also welcomed the Organisation Improvement Manager to the meeting. The Organisation Improvement Manager explained to the Committee what her role and involvement was in the LGR programme and also explained her responsibilities as manager of communications at WVDC.

The Organisation Improvement Manager outlined the various methods used to ensure accurate, timely and consistent LGR communications were received by staff at the authority. Aware that there was no guarantee that communications were being received by all staff, the Organisation Improvement Manager outlined alternative methods of communications such as video conferencing and team meeting toolkit materials which could be used in future to improve existing practices.

The Organisation Improvement Manager informed the Committee that it was vital to have effective communications during the transitional process if the present climate of uncertainty was to be alleviated and staff morale maintained.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 5:20pm

DRAFT

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

5th November 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V Shuttleworth (Chair) Councillor Anderson, Bowser, Mrs. Jopling, and Murphy,
APOLOGIES	Councillor Mrs. Lee and Lethbridge
ADVISERS	R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager and J. Hodgson, Scrutiny Support Officer

56. TRANSITIONAL PROCESS REVIEW – INTERVIEW WITH THE ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

The chair welcomed the Acting Chief Executive of Wear Valley District Council to the meeting. The Acting Chief Executive explained to the Committee what role the authority had within the overall LGR context and also what affect that role was having on Wear Valley District Council. The Acting Chief Executive informed the Committee that any associated risks could be alleviated if the authority remained focused on what it considered as important and on what it could actually achieve in the five months remaining before Vesting Day.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 4:30pm

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

13TH November 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V Shuttleworth (Chair) Mr. Brady, Mrs. Cowing (co-optees) Councillor Lethbridge, and Murphy
APOLOGIES	Mr. Davison (co-optee) Councillor Mrs. Lee and Bowser
ADVISERS	R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager and J. Hodgson, Scrutiny Support Officer

57. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETINGS HELD ON 30TH JUNE 2008, 3RD JULY 2008, 11TH JULY 2008, 7TH AUGUST 2008, 4TH SEPTEMBER 2008 AND 18TH SEPTEMBER 2008

The minutes were read and confirmed as a true record.

58. INTERNAL AUDIT PERFORMANCE, APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2008 – REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT

The chair welcomed Mr. Brady as a co-optee onto the Committee for the duration of the review and welcomed the Internal Audit Manager to the meeting. The Internal Audit Manager reviewed the previous six months internal audit with the Committee and explained that there had been 30 audit reports carried out so far totalling 49% of their annual plan and that the target for end of year would be met.

RESOLVED To approve the work carried out by internal audit.

59. TRANSITIONAL PROCESS REVIEW – INTERVIEW WITH THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The Chair welcomed the Head of Human Resources to the meeting. The Head of Human Resources explained to the Committee what her role was within the LGR programme and also in communicating HR issues to the staff at Wear Valley District Council. The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that terms and conditions for staff would not be completely harmonised before Vesting Day. As such, there was a growing climate of uncertainty which was not being helped by the fact that the new structures for the new authority had not been formalised.

The Head of Human Resources explained that the HR workstream had applied a risk matrix to measure the likelihood of associated risks during the transitional period and that it was regularly updated to reflect the progress and changes that were being made.

Staff retention and sick absence levels during the transitional period had remained good at Wear Valley and the Chair congratulated the staff for their loyalty to the authority during this time.

The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that training and development opportunities would remain available for all staff at Wear Valley in the run up to Vesting Day with additional HR support made available to staff should the need arise.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 6.05 pm

DRAFT

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

19th November 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V Shuttleworth (Chair) Councillor Anderson, Bowser, Mr. Davison (co-optee), Councillor Lethbridge, Murphy
APOLOGIES	Councillor Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Jopling
ADVISERS	R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager, J. Hodgson, Scrutiny Support Officer, D. Parkin, Performance Officer and M. Cooper, Value for Money Officer

60. PERFORMANCE CLINIC (COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE) BRIEFING SESSION

The Performance Officer and the Value for Money Officer were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair. The Committee discussed, questioned and clarified the November 2008 quarter performance data with the officers. The officers provided the Committee with a deeper understanding of the data in readiness for the Committee's forthcoming Communities Directorate Performance Clinic.

61. ALTERNATE WEEKLY COLLECTION PAPER TRAIL REPORT

The Scrutiny Manager proposed to members, as an addition to the alternate weekly collection report, an extra annex listing the paper trail in its entirety. Members agreed its inclusion at Annex B. An addition to paragraph 7 of the report was made to highlight Annex B.

62. TRANSITIONAL PROCESS REVIEW DRAFT INTERIM REPORT

The Scrutiny Support Officer discussed the draft interim report and draft recommendations contained within it with the Committee. The Scrutiny Support Officer provided the Committee with an in-depth analysis of why each of the draft recommendations put forward had been derived from a sound evidence base and how each recommendation was SMART and would add value and improvement to existing practice in what time remained as an authority before Vesting Day. Members agreed the recommendations and decided that they should be put to Council.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

DRAFT

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

26th November 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V Shuttleworth (Chair) Councillor Anderson, Mr. Davison (co-optee), Councillor Lethbridge, Murphy
APOLOGIES	Councillor Mrs. Lee
ADVISERS	R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager, J. Hodgson, Scrutiny Support Officer, D. Parkin, Performance Officer and M. Cooper, Value for Money Officer

64. PERFORMANCE CLINIC (ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATES) BRIEFING SESSION

The Performance Officer and the Value for Money Officer were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair. The Committee discussed, questioned and clarified the November 2008 quarter performance data with the officers. Discussions focused on National and local indicators, data quality analysis, service plans, risk registers and volatile budgets. The officers provided the Committee with a deeper understanding of the data in readiness for the Committee's forthcoming Performance Clinics.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

27TH NOVEMBER 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V. Shuttleworth (Chair) Councillors Lethbridge and Murphy; Mr. E. Brady and Mr. R. Davison (co-optees)
APOLOGIES	Councillor Mrs. Lee
ADVISERS	A. Baker, Revenues and Benefits Manager; R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager; M. Cooper, Value for Money Officer; S. Dawson, Assistant Director for Economic Regeneration; T. Carver, Head of Public Protection; A. Foster, Head of Human Resources; R. Hope; Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration; S. Reid, Acting Strategic Director for Resource Management; D. Townsend, Head of Development and Building Control

35. PERFORMANCE CLINIC (ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION)

The Chair introduced the co-optees to the Officers present.

Members agreed the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Directorate performance clinic of 25th July 2008.

National indicators

The Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration explained performance against the indicators to the Committee.

NI151: It was explained that this indicator could hide problems in the district as it potentially applied to those working just one hour a week.

NI154: The department was trying to remove barriers to site development. The Council was unable to force housing development and a lot of effort was being made to compensate for the housing market failure. The target was based around what is expected of the Council in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

NI159: It was explained to the Committee that the Council had a statutory requirement placed on it to provide a 5 year supply of land for housing development.

Service plan

The Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration stated that there was little difference to previous service plans. The service plan included implementing the Local Plan, environmental controls and the Economic Strategy. Important parts of the service plan had been picked up in the Council's transitional plan. Growth point was not covered in great detail in the service plan. The promotion of south and east Bishop Auckland to become Wear Valley's growth points were a consideration.

Members questioned what the forum for business was. The Assistant Director for Economic Regeneration stated that it was the economic theme group of Wear Valley LSP, which gave businesses the opportunity to comment on the Council's and its partners' strategy. Members questioned whether parish councils were involved in the forum. The response was that there was Community Network involvement, which then fed back to the parish councils; there were no barriers to the parish councils becoming involved directly. It was also stated that the forum was a good place to coordinate activity with, for example, the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus. Members questioned the continuity of the partnership in light of LGR. The response was that the area's partnerships had been mapped and fed up to the County Council.

Key action (KA) 4:

Members questioned key action 4 which was about improving the competitiveness of business. The Assistant Director for Economic Regeneration explained that no business would get funding without a sound business plan. The Enterprise Agency makes recommendations as to whether to approve a request for business assistance or not. A request wouldn't be approved if there wasn't a viable market.

KA 8:

Members questioned how quality of life was defined. The Assistant Director for Economic Regeneration explained that consideration was given to the strengths of the area. For example the strengths include the scenery such as the North Penines, etc. Members queried how the service was promoting the quality of life in the district. The Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration stated that services such as housing and landscaping were used by the council to improve the quality of life in the district.

KA 51:

87% of decisions had previously been made under delegated powers. This had an impact on performance as taking an application to the planning committee adds 2 weeks to the process.

Risk register

The Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration mentioned the risk of staff loss over the coming months. The transitional plan and the capital programme were, however, fully funded.

The Head of Public Protection stated that it was harder to get a consensus on licensing issues with the other authorities in the run up to Vesting Day. The new authority's licensing policy is only now going out for consultation. Other key risks identified were a downturn in activity in the housing market and a possible reduction in Housing Delivery Grant. Planning Delivery Grant will only be paid to one authority in future, rather than seven.

Volatile budgets

The anomaly was due to lack of demand.

The performance clinic finished at 11:30am.

36. PERFORMANCE CLINIC (CENTRAL RESOURCES)

Members agreed the minutes of the Central Resources Directorate performance clinic of 11th July 2008.

National Indicators

The Acting Strategic Director for Resource Management explained that some BVPIs had been retained by the department as they were useful measures of performance.

NI179: The actual figure was closer to £451,000. What VFM consists of is not entirely clear. The guidance allows the inclusion of efficiencies achieved over and above government targets, hence the revision of the forecast. The government is now looking for cash releasing savings. The Acting Strategic Director for Resource Management predicted a positive direction of travel by the year end. The Chair pointed out the confusion between the figures stated by the NI table and the same figure in the service plan. The Acting Strategic Director for Resource Management stated that £30,000 of savings will not be realisable. £351,000 is the accurate figure.

HR Indicators

The Head of Human Resources explained that there were no NIs for HR, although certain BVPIs had been retained as local performance indicators. The equality and diversity agenda made up the majority of the indicators.

BV011a: 5% of the workforce equates to 22 staff. If one individual leaves it has a big effect on the target.

BV011b: As the authority has not been advertising there has not been the opportunity for improvement.

The Chair questioned what action could be taken to improve against these PIs. The Head of Human Resources stated that for senior management posts adverts in publications such as women's magazines, etc. were used.

BV002a: A self declaration was made stating that the authority was at equality standard two. This was based on the fact that the equality impact assessments had been completed and the equality and diversity working group formed.

BV012: It was unlikely that this target would be met due to pressure on staff.

Service Plan

Revenues and benefits: Customers were surveyed and were found to be more satisfied than last year.

1st Stop Shop: Members questioned how the numbers of missed calls could be reduced. The Acting Strategic Director for Resource Management stated that knowledge of potentially busy times, such as when council tax bills had been issued, could be used to deploy staff to counter the extra demand.

Risk register

A drop-off in staff morale was a main risk. Keeping staff informed was not easy because it is subject to receiving information from the County Council.

Other risks were a loss of service continuity in the transition and the loss of specialised staff working in areas such as fraud, business rate, elections and legal areas.

LGR is a corporate risk.

Volatile budgets

No issues were raised.

The Chair commended staff for their engagement.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 3:35pm

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(INTERNAL)**

11TH DECEMBER 2008

PRESENT	Councillor V. Shuttleworth (Chair) Councillors Anderson, Lethbridge, Murphy and Mr. Reg Davidson (co-optee)
APOLOGIES	Councillor Bowser
ADVISERS	R. Bowman, Scrutiny Manager; L. Serewicz, Policy and Partnerships Manager

**37. TRANSITIONAL PROCESS REVIEW – PRESENTATION BY THE
POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER**

The Policy and Partnerships Manager discussed with Members some of the arrangements in place for the LGR transitional process. Members were informed about the latest developments with Area Action Partnerships and how the authority was feeding into the LGR process through the LGR workstreams.

CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 5:45pm