

Item 5

REPORT TO COUNCIL

10th JANUARY 2008

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE COUNTY DURHAM COUNCIL PROGRAMME – APPOINTMENT TO JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. SUMMARY

Council is requested to appoint a representative, together with a named substitute, to a Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee established to deliver the accountability arrangements required for the Implementation Executive. The Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee will operate in the first transitional period, i.e. until May 2008

2. RECOMMENDATION

1. That nominations be sought for the appointment of a representative and a named substitute to the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. DETAIL

A Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee has been established as part of the 'County Durham Council' change programme structure to deliver the accountability arrangements required for the Implementation Executive. The Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee will operate in the first transitional period, i.e. until May 2008.

The Joint Committee will consist of a total of 18 Members comprising:

- Durham County Council's Chairman and Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, together with Chairmen of each of its Scrutiny Sub Committees. (8 members).
- The Chairman or a Lead Member of Overview and Scrutiny from each of the Borough/District Councils. (7 Members)
- A representative from each of Durham County Councils minority groups namely Liberal Democrats, Independent and Conservative. (3 Members)

Council is therefore required to appoint a representative, together with a named substitute.

The Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee are attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Contact Officer: David Anderson, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Telephone No: (01388) 816166, Ext. 4109
Email Address: danderson@sedgefield.gov.uk

Background Papers

- Report to the Implementation Executive, 4th January 2008.

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Role

The Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in line with the preferred bid and in the first transitional period, will:

- Hold the Implementation Executive (IE) to account by providing critical challenge to ensure that it (the I.E.) provides the high level strategic direction for the implementation of the new unitary council;
- Scrutinise decisions made, or actions taken, by the IE;
- Assist the IE in its role by commenting on all major stages of the implementation Programme;
- Consider information and reports relevant to the Programme development, including Programme updates;
- Invite the Chair of the IE, Programme Director and representatives of the Senior Officer Group (as appropriate) to attend panel meetings;
- Hold its meetings soon after the IE meetings so that it may comment and contribute to shaping the implementation programme;

2. Officer Support

The Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be supported in its role by Durham County Council's Head of Overview and Scrutiny, together with a Scrutiny Officer from a District Council, supported by DCC Democratic Services.

3. Business

Wherever possible the business of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be progressed through consensus. However, where a consensus cannot be reached, agreement will be made on the basis of a simple majority vote from attendees at each meeting.

Recommendations will be made to the IE as appropriate.

Agendas and supporting papers will be circulated at least five working days before a meeting.

Any other urgent business can be discussed, subject to this being agreed by the Chair twenty four hours before the meeting starts.

4. Substitutes

Whilst Members of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee should try and attend meetings, if unable to attend a particular meeting they can be represented by a named non-executive (overview and scrutiny member) substitute from the constituent authority concerned.

5. Meetings

The Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee will meet not less than 10 days after the IE in order to ensure it meets access requirements.

Additional meetings can be convened by the Chairman as and when required.

It is suggested that the meetings of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee are open meetings/held in public.

6. Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chair of Durham County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will act as Chairman. The Vice Chairman will be a District Council representative.

7. Secretariat

The Secretary will be provided by Durham County Council and summary notes and outcomes only will be reported following the meeting.

8. Place of Meetings

Venues for meetings will be rotated across the eight councils.

9. Meeting Protocols

These cover principles of engagement that demonstrate a commitment to:

- Openness and honesty
- Fairness
- Respect
- Aiming for excellence and learning from the best
- Discussing disagreement and working towards consensus where possible
- Critical Friend
- Evidence based and Outcome focused
- Acknowledging any possible individual vested interest.

These principles reflects the approach that has been adopted in considering the terms of reference for the IE.