

COMMITTEE: SCRUTINY BOARD

DATE: 22ND JANUARY 2003

SUBJECT: CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Board about the establishment of the Centre for Public Scrutiny

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Scrutiny Board is recommended to note the report.

BACKGROUND

3. I was invited to attend the launch of the Centre for Public Scrutiny at City Hall, London on 4th December 2002 at which Robin Cook MP was the keynote speaker.

REPORT

4. The modernisation agenda has been a challenge for local authorities and their experience has generally been that the scrutiny role has been the most challenging part of that agenda. However there has until now been very little available in the way of practical support for authorities in terms of the development of an effective scrutiny function and no mechanism to enable cross fertilisation to take place so that best practice can be shared across sectors.

5. This was the background against which the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) took the lead in consulting about the need for a Centre for Public Scrutiny.
6. The results of that consultation identified the mutual benefits across the public sector as to :
 - Promote the role of scrutiny and to raise its profile
 - Develop a more rigorous understanding of the different approaches to scrutiny and how to make it effective
 - Facilitate linkages between different tiers of government and their scrutiny activities
7. As a result of the response to the consultation the IDeA has launched the CPS and the prospectus was issued at the launch.
8. The prospectus sets out:
 - The vision for scrutiny which guides the development of the Centre
 - The purpose of the Centre
 - The governance arrangements of the Centre
 - The role of the Director and key year one milestones
 - The timetable for establishing the Centre
9. A copy of the prospectus is attached as an appendix.
10. The Centre has been set up with support from the Department of Health, the London Assembly, Deloitte and Touche and the IDeA. The first Chair of the CPS is Dr. Tony Wright MP who is Chair of the Select Committee for Public Administration.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

11. The Council is a member of the CPS by virtue of its membership of the Local Government Association of which the IDeA is a subsidiary.

APPENDIX

12. Centre for Public Scrutiny - Prospectus

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

13. None