

COMMITTEE: SCRUTINY BOARD

DATE: 21ST JULY 2009

**SUBJECT: INTERNAL AND IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY REVIEW OF SCRUTINY AND PROPOSED
SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN.**

REPORT BY: SCRUTINY MANAGER

CONTACT OFFICER: MARK FARMER

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	✓	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING		OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE

1. To present Members the findings of an internal and external review of Scrutiny and a proposed improvement action plan.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. The Board is recommended to:
 - (i) To note the findings of the internal review process set out at Appendix A.
 - (ii) To note the Improvement and Development Agencies report set out at Appendix B.
 - (iii) To consider and approve the proposed Improvement Action plan set out at Appendix C.

BACKGROUND

3. Back in December 2008, a report was taken by the Scrutiny Manager To Scrutiny Board, recommending that the Councils Scrutiny processes and systems were comprehensively reviewed. He also sought authority to establish a review project board.
4. In January 2009, the Scrutiny review project board was established, with the role of leading the work of the review team. Membership of the Board included, Councillors Taylor (Chair) and Timoney, representing the Labour Group, Councillor Garratt, representing the Conservative Group and Kevin Crompton, Chief Executive representing the Corporate Leadership Management Team. The project manager is Mark Farmer, with the Scrutiny Team as the project support team.
5. The Scrutiny Team (the project support team) working with Luton Excellence established a review process based on the 'lean principles' approach being used across the Council. The internal review, using this process, established a high level cross departmental officer group which analysed those areas which needed improvement and what could be done to improve them.
6. At the same time, the review project board commissioned the Improvement and Development Agency to carry out an independent review of Scrutiny. The review team was comprised of a Improvement and Development Agency Improvement Manager, the former Leader Labour Leader of Southampton Council, a Senior Conservative Councillor from Devon, a Senior Liberal Democrat Councillor from Islington and the Head of Scrutiny at Tower Hamlets Council.
7. Their review process included face-to-face interviews with officers, elected members, partners and members of the public and a comprehensive document review. Their preliminary findings were presented to the Council at the end of the three day onsite process.
8. The Council received a copy of the Improvement Development Agency review Teams' draft report in May. A number of minor changes were agreed with the Improvement and Development Agency and a final version of the report was agreed in June. A copy of the report has been e-mailed to all elected members and all officers involved with the review. The report has also been published on the Councils website and has been press released; the story has received positive press coverage.
9. In response to the findings, with the support of officers across the Council, the Scrutiny team has developed an Improvement Action Plan. The plan

makes a number of recommendations about what needs to happen to improve Scrutiny.

REPORT

10. The process of review which was followed is outlined at Appendix A.
11. The IDEA review document made a number of recommendations for improved working for consideration by the Council. The final report document is set out at Appendix B and this is submitted to the Scrutiny Board for formal consideration.
12. Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan has been drafted to respond to the critiques of the IDEA review document. The Action Plan is attached at Appendix C and the approval of the Board to the content of that document, is requested.
13. Feedback from the Scrutiny Away Day which took place on Saturday 11th July, on the Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan and the role and purpose of Scrutiny will be presented at the board meeting.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

14. Members are asked to review the proposed Improvement Action Plan and make any comments or amendments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no direct legal implications in this report. However, a number of the actions within the proposed Improvement Action Plan being implemented could result in constitutional changes being required. Any proposed changes to the constitution would need to come back to the Board for further consideration and would need to be considered by the constitution committee. Any changes to the constitution need to be taken by Council. This was agreed with Richard Stevens in Legal Services on 13 July 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. The Scrutiny review was allocated a budget of upto £15,000. Through cost management, the review came in under budget at £11,500. The Scrutiny Manager also negotiated three days free support from the Improvement and Development Agency, which resulted in savings of approximately £2,400. There are no direct financial implications that arise as a result of the internal and external review findings. This was agreed with Mark Turner, Finance and Airport Client Manager.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17. The Improvement Action Plan proposes that the processes that Scrutiny operates under are reviewed to make them more effective. It is essential that equalities, inclusion and cohesion issues are addressed at this stage and that the Scrutiny service ensures that the scrutiny requirements sets out in the Chief Executives Department Equalities plan are fully met. It is also important that a renewed Scrutiny system takes up the Equalities leadership role it has under the current and new equalities framework for Local Government.
18. The report also notes that we have a diverse range of Councillors and that this strength can be built upon, further consideration will need to be given about how this can be achieved. This was agreed with the Head of Equalities on 10th July 2009.

APPENDIX

19. The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A - Internal review process information (To follow)
Appendix B - Improvement and Development Agencies final report
Appendix C - Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan

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