

**TO: Environment Scrutiny Committee - 17 June 2003**

**SUBJECT: Portfolio Holder Responsibilities and Scrutiny Arrangements.**

**FROM: The Monitoring Officer**

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

For members of the three Scrutiny Committees to be given the opportunity to consider the proposals for submission to the Standards Committee and Council to effect constitutional changes in respect of first, areas of responsibility for Portfolio Holders and secondly, terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committees themselves.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 24 June, Standards Committee will be asked to recommend to Council that a number of changes are made to the constitution, including amendments to the areas of responsibility for Portfolio Holders, together with revised terms of reference for renamed scrutiny committees. The number of these committees will also increase to 4. Council will then decide on these recommendations at its meeting on 9 July.
- 2.2 Annexed at Appendix 1 is a schedule setting out details of the revised responsibilities for the Council's Portfolio Holders, with accompanying confirmation as to the responsibilities of the corresponding Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 Also annexed at Appendix 2 is a revised Article 6 from the constitution, reflecting the appropriate changes to the terms of reference for the committees themselves.
- 2.4 The new Council is in the process of adopting its corporate strategy. This document will set out its objectives and priorities for the next four years and it will form the overarching context for a rationalised approach to service planning and performance management. This will be an important contribution to the Council's response to last year's EFQM Peer Assessment, which in turn, will be an integral and necessary step in preparing for next year's Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Realigning the areas of responsibility for Portfolio Holders, with attendant revisions to Scrutiny terms of reference, is also seen as being necessary to rationalise the process.
- 2.5 To help Members make a comparison with existing arrangements, annexed at Appendix 3 is a copy of the final work plan report (and ancillary documents) that was presented to the Committee in the final meeting cycle of the old Council.

2.6 Although the constitution makes no provision for a role for the Council's Scrutiny committees in prospective constitutional changes, it is anticipated that members of those committees will have a keen interest in any amending proposals; hence this opportunity to comment in advance of the report to Standards Committee.

### **3 POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK**

There are no financial implications arising from these proposals. In policy terms, an integrated approach to service delivery and performance management will make an important contribution to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. Further, robust and transparent decision-making under the modernisation agenda for local government relies upon a proactive, relevant and effective approach to the crucial role of overview and scrutiny.

### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members scrutinise the proposed constitutional changes and make known their comments for consideration by Standards Committee.

Nigel Roberts  
Director (Monitoring Officer)

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**Areas in District Affected: All**

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