

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 16TH FEBRUARY 2010

Report of the Acting Director of Programmes and Resources

ITEM 11 SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME – SCRUTINY OF REMAINING REVIEWS

Purpose of Report

To determine how scrutiny of the remaining Service Reviews will be undertaken.

Action Requested

1. Determine which service reviews should be scrutinised prior to consideration by Cabinet or delegate this responsibility as appropriate.
2. Determine which body/bodies will consider the chosen Service Reviews (Commission, a sub-group of Commission members or another Scrutiny Committee). If another body is established, appoint the membership and appoint a chair.
3. Consider Officer and Cabinet Member support for the process.

Policy Context

The delivery of a programme of Service Reviews will contribute to the Council's aim of continually improving the way we do business, setting challenging but realistic targets, and delivering value for money on Council services.

It is also of note that the Audit Commission considers the process of conducting service reviews, and Scrutiny's involvement in these, to be 'good practice' in assessing a council's 'Use of Resources', an element within the current Comprehensive Area Assessment regime. In particular, in their report on Charnwood Borough Council's use of resources for 2008/09, the Audit Commission recommended in respect of Key Line of Enquiry 1.1 (financial planning) that:

- Corporate objectives and priorities need to be more focussed
- There needs to be clear criteria for decision making on revenue allocation
- Steps needed to be identified to reduce the funding gap identified by the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Background

Cabinet, on 27th November 2009, approved a set of Service Reviews which were to be undertaken and the outcome of which was to be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet (Cabinet Minute 119 2009/2010). A timetable has now been drafted setting out when completed service reviews are to be considered by Cabinet, this is

attached as Appendix I. It is important to note that this is a draft timetable and therefore, some reviews could be rescheduled.

At its meeting on 15th December 2009, the Commission considered it important and useful for scrutiny to have input in respect of the service reviews taking place prior to any decision by Cabinet. The possible need for additional meetings for consideration of this matter was noted given that scheduled meetings were fully programmed.

The Scrutiny Commission decided that the Chair and Vice-chair of the Commission should consider the 13 areas for review and decide which of those reviews should be considered by scrutiny (either by the Commission or appropriate scrutiny committee). The Commission requested that in all cases reviews should be considered in advance of any decision by Cabinet.

Consideration by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission

On 2nd February 2010, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission met with the Chief Executive and considered options for pursuing this matter. Given that the timetable could be revised, it would be difficult to schedule full meetings of the Scrutiny Commission, especially since it would only be confirmed that a particular review was being submitted to Cabinet when the agenda for the Cabinet meeting was published. Since scrutiny of the items would need to take place between the report to Cabinet being published and the Cabinet meeting (in effect between a Thursday and a Wednesday), it was considered more flexible to establish a sub-group of 5 members (3 Conservative, 1 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat) to meet to consider the report and make comments and recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

Options Available with Reasons

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
A sub-group of 5 members (3 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat) be established.	The group can quickly be established and meet to discuss reviews following notice of their publication on the Cabinet agenda.	A sub-group is not formally established as part of the Scrutiny process and therefore could be taken less seriously. There is no requirement to comply with Access to information procedures.
Scrutiny Commission consider the reviews (additional meetings will be required to meet the timetable in some cases)	The main Scrutiny body has formal legitimacy to consider cross-cutting, corporate and financial issues.	Meetings would need to be programmed and agendas published prior to knowing whether Cabinet will be considering a review and therefore meetings could be cancelled or items withdrawn.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Commission and Scrutiny Committees consider reviews as appropriate	Relevant committees would be able to add value within their terms of reference.	Ad-hoc nature would mean lack of clarity on who was considering a matter, duplication and arrangement of extra meetings (which could be cancelled)
Do not consider reports prior to Cabinet and if a member is dissatisfied with the Cabinet decision, call-in that decision with the support of 4 other members.	Scrutiny will only consider those service reviews where at least 5 members of the Council disagree with decision taken by Cabinet. If everyone is happy with the decision, then there would be no need to have further discussion on the subject.	Cabinet would not have the collective view of scrutiny members prior to the meeting and therefore would not be able to act upon it.

Financial and Legal Implications

The requirements in respect of Access to Information are set out in part 4 of the Council's Constitution. These rules set minimum requirements in respect notice of meetings, publication of reports and right of members of the public to attend meetings. The Scrutiny Commission and Scrutiny Committees are subject to these rules; however, a sub-group is not required to comply with these rules.

Risk Management

There are no specific risks associated with this decision.

Background Papers: None

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APPENDIX I - Service Review Programme 2009/10 and 2010/11 (including proposed Cabinet dates)

Cabinet Date	Service Area	Service classification	Relevant cost centres		Ongoing savings targets	Indicative savings generated
18th February 2010 <i>(NOTE: this item is on the Commission agenda for 16th February 2010)</i>	Communications	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	G105	Communications & Consultation Team	Ongoing annual savings equivalent to 20% of the current budget	2010/11 - £25,000 Ongoing - £50,000
18th March 2010	Community Grants	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	C301 C302 C304 C305	Community Services (SLAS) Fearon Hall Community Grants - Non-SLAS Gorse Covert Community Centre	2010/11 and ongoing savings target of £28,000 per annum	2010/11 - £28,000 Ongoing - £28,000
18th March 2010	Engineering Services	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	N140 N200 N320 N330 N700	CCTV External Contracts Engineering Services (former S200) Footway Lighting Street Furniture and Bus Shelters Flood Prevention	Ongoing annual savings equivalent to 20% of the current budget	2010/11 - £47,000 Ongoing - £94,000

Cabinet Date	Service Area	Service classification	Relevant cost centres		Ongoing savings targets	Indicative savings generated
18th March 2010	Museums	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	L940 T150 T170 T180	Old Rectory Museum Museum Cafe Visitor Service Centre Charnwood Museum	Ongoing annual savings equivalent to 20% of the current budget	2010/11 - £25,000 Ongoing - £50,000
8th July 2010	Arts and Culture	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	T190 T195 T200	Arts Policy Public Events Culture Arts & Heritage Service Unit	Ongoing annual savings equivalent to 20% of the current budget	2010/11 - £20,000 Ongoing - £40,000
8th July 2010	Conservation and Design	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	P299	Conservation & Landscape SU	Ongoing annual savings equivalent to 20% of the current budget	2010/11 - £23,000 Ongoing - £46,000
8th July 2010	CCTV	Not identified as low priority – however, the original business plan is not being fulfilled and reductions in service levels may be accepted	A008	CCTV monitoring	Ongoing annual subsidy of CCTV (currently c£110,000) to be reduced by £50,000.	2010/11 - £25,000 Ongoing - £50,000

Cabinet Date	Service Area	Service classification	Relevant cost centres		Ongoing savings targets	Indicative savings generated
8th July 2010	Leisure & Environment Administration	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	L001	Leisure & Environment Directorate	Ongoing annual savings equivalent to 20% of the current budget	2010/11 - £16,000 Ongoing - £32,000
8th July 2010	Loughborough Town Hall and Tourism	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	T001 T100 T110 T130 T140 P102	Town Hall Overheads Town Hall-Direct Operational Expenses Town Hall Catering Town Hall Concerts and Shows Town Hall Lettings Tourism	Ongoing annual subsidy of the Town Hall (currently c£340,000) to be reduced by £100,000.	2010/11 - £50,000 Ongoing - £100,000
8th July 2010	Pubic Conveniences	Low priority Reductions in service levels may be accepted	M700	Public Conveniences	Ongoing annual savings equivalent to 20% of the current budget	2010/11 - £17,000 Ongoing - £34,000
To Be Scheduled	Contact centre	May not be delivering best value Reductions in service levels are not acceptable	V023	Contact Centre- General Fund	Ongoing annual savings of £50,000 per annum	2010/11 - £25,000 Ongoing - £50,000