

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	02/03/06
	Executive Cabinet	09/03/06

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To seek Members approval to the draft Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan, which has been produced following the completion of the Centre for Public Scrutiny self-evaluation framework.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- The implementation of an Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan arising from the self-evaluation workshop session will ensure that the Council has the capacity to deliver further improvements to the Overview and Scrutiny role in line with best practice. It will also meet the emerging strategic objective of being a performing organisation which is continually striving to improve.

RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	✓	Information	
Reputation		Regulatory/Legal	✓
Financial		Operational	✓
People		Other	

- It is essential that a corporate and strategic approach is adopted towards improvements in the operation of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function. The improvement plan identifies a number of actions which need to be undertaken in order to:
 - Ensure the plan adds value to the Council's wider improvement programme and delivery of the Corporate Strategy and Community Strategy
 - Communicate the potential of scrutiny to local communities
 - Encourage involvement in the process of those being scrutinised
 - Build confidence of those undertaking scrutiny activities
 - Demonstrate the value of the scrutiny role

BACKGROUND

- In view of the issues raised in the Council's CPA assessment relating to the ineffective Overview and Scrutiny role, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Cabinet gave approval to a workshop being held to complete the self - evaluation framework for Overview and Scrutiny produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS).

6. The self - evaluation framework for Overview and Scrutiny produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) provides for the first time, a mechanism for local authorities to demonstrate the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny and, identify areas and means for improvement.
7. The framework is in four sections reflecting the principles set out in the CfPS Good Scrutiny Guide:
 - Provide a 'critical friend' challenge
 - Reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
 - Take the lead and own the scrutiny
 - Make an impact on service delivery

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8. 30 Members of the Council and the Senior Management Group attended a workshop session held on 20 October 2005 at the Woodlands Conference Centre, Chorley to complete the CfPS framework and, during the exercise Members and Officers were requested to demonstrate evidence of achievement, identify areas for improvement, and highlight potential barriers to improvement for inclusion in an Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan.
9. The attached Improvement Plan identifies 13 actions to improve the delivery of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Function.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

10. The improvement plan will require significant staff and member time and, effort to deliver the outcomes. However this is a cost from within the current budget. The main marginal cost will come from the need for training, but this should be contained within the current cash budget allocated to training.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

11. I acknowledge that training and development for Members and Officers has been identified as an area for improvement against a number of the CfPS scrutiny principles. In order to ensure that training and development delivers the intended outcomes and improvements I would recommend that a further detailed needs analysis exercise is carried out in terms of the knowledge and skills required for all involved with the process and at the various levels. This would then provide a detailed plan of training with specific objectives, which can then be evaluated in terms of improvements to the process.

RECOMMENDATION

12. That the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan be approved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13. To improve the delivery of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

14. None.

DONNA HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Report to Executive Cabinet - Overview & Scrutiny Self Evaluation Framework	07/04/05	-	Town Hall Chorley

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Steve Pearce	5196	20 February 2006	ADMINREP/O&S IMPROVEMENT PLAN