

DRAFT



Revision History

Revision Date	Created	Previous Revision Date	Version

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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This Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan forms part of the Council's Performance Management process. The document brings together areas of existing good practice and areas for improvement which have been identified, following the compilation of the Centre for Public Scrutiny self-evaluation framework at a workshop session held on 20 October 2005, attended by Members of the Council and the Senior Management Group. These areas are the ones that the Council will be focusing its attentions on to remove the barriers to the Council achieving its corporate vision of excellence.

This Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan will be kept up to date and will form the key control document for the Executive Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that our plans are kept on track.

We want to share our progress with everyone and regular updates will be posted to the Council's website at www.chorley.gov.uk. In addition, we will provide regular information on how we are doing through the Council's magazine, Chorley Borough News, and through regular press releases.

If you have any comments relating to the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement Plan or require any further information, please contact:

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Councillor J Wilson, Executive Leader



Councillor D Ederley
Executive Member for Customers, Policy and
Performance



Councillor J Walker
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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SCRUTINY PRINCIPLE	FOCUS	EVIDENCE OF WHAT WE DO WELL	OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS PLANNED	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	BY WHEN	BY WHOM		PROGRESS UPDATE
							Officer	Member	
1. Provide 'critical friend' challenge	1.1 Does scrutiny provide an effective challenge to the Executive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Non Cabinet Members can attend Cabinet meetings - receive all papers ➢ Revised Forward Plan ➢ Toolkit ➢ Pls and Business Plans quarterly ➢ Non political in the main ➢ Shadow Executive Cabinet members appointed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour members reluctant to criticise Executive - more commitment/need for training • Need to improve Executive Cabinet involvement in scrutiny • Increase public awareness • Feed success back to public • Officer support for O&S • Call-in should be used more • Provide the opportunity for Scrutiny Members to question Executive Members 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement Overview and Scrutiny training sessions on a regular basis for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Cabinet Members • Scrutiny Committee/ Panel members • Overview and Scrutiny Panel chairs • SMG Officers • Democratic Services Section 2. Introduce questions with two days notice to Executive Members at Council meetings 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear understanding of Overview and Scrutiny function 	With effect from June 2006	Steve Pearce/Sue Baxendale	Councillor M Lees	Provision of Overview and Scrutiny training to be included in the Member Development Programme for 2006/07
	1.2 How does scrutiny have an impact on the work of the Executive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Scrutiny Reviews - evidence gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-in (used once) - should be received positively • Ensure appropriate Cabinet Members attend Inquiry hearings • Increase public involvement in O&S to initiative topics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Actively invite public to submit Overview and Scrutiny topics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. More effective challenge to the Executive 3. Improved public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny 	Conclusion of Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry (October 2006)	Donna Hall	Councillor J Wilson	Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel currently undertaking scrutiny inquiry

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	<p>1.3 How does scrutiny routinely challenge the authority's corporate strategy and budget?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Business Plans and PI's go to O&S committee/Panels every quarter ➢ Monthly financial monitoring reports go to O&S Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny members should have more say in strategic items from the start • O&S Committee to meet prior to Executive Cabinet to scrutinise reports • More training on budget process • Presentations on strategic issues to O&S members • Scrutiny of budget process needs to be improved. Reluctance to discuss for political reasons • Improved monitoring of performance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Improved scrutiny of draft policy and strategy documents before they are agreed for consultation purposes. 5. Improved scrutiny of budget 6. Improved scrutiny of performance management within the authority 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Effective scrutiny of policy and strategic documents 	<p>March 2006</p>	Donna Hall	Councillor J Walker	<p>Executive Cabinet agreed on 8 September 2005 that all draft policy/strategy documents should be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>	
					<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Effective scrutiny of budget 6. Effective performance management 	<p>From March 2006 December 2006</p>	Gary Hall Donna Hall	Councillor J Walker Councillor D Ederley	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Panels will be scrutinising elements of the budget for 2006/07 during February 2006</p>	
	<p>1.4 Are external partners involved in scrutiny and how are they included?</p>	<p>Scrutiny Inquiries on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding • One Stop Shop • Juvenile nuisance - Youth and Community Service • Parkwise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC to scrutinise partners and vice versa • Scrutinise LCC Ask partners/consultative bodies for topics/comments • Bring 'everyone' together to improve service delivery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Implement scrutiny of external partners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Focused scrutiny of local partnership bodies 	<p>December 2006</p>	Tim Rignall	Councillor Ederley		

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1.5 Does scrutiny work effectively with the Executive and senior management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Overview and Scrutiny Chair presents Inquiry Reports to Executive Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings between Leader/Chief Executive with O&S Chairs • Prioritise key issues for scrutiny • Member training on the 'real issues'/chairing skills/O&S Procedures/Role of the Executive and Senior Management • Capacity of Councillors • SMG to refer policy docs to Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to consultation 	<p>8. (a) Programmed meetings of Overview and Scrutiny chairs with officers</p> <p>(b) Programmed meetings of Overview and Scrutiny chairs with Executive Leader/Chief Executive</p> <p>See Item 1</p> <p>See Item 4</p>	<p>8. Effective working relationship between Overview and Scrutiny Chair with Leader/Chief Executive</p>	From May 2006	Donna Hall	Councillor J Wilson		
2. Reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Recommendations at front of report > Consult partnerships and relevant organisations > Articles in newspaper and website > Regular monitoring reports on Inquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be more proactive rather than reactive • More effective communications with partners • More information on website and Borough News • Regular Overview and Scrutiny articles in Borough News • Ensure widespread distribution of Borough News 	<p>9. Improved communication/publicity of Overview and Scrutiny activities</p>	<p>9. Effective publicity for Overview and Scrutiny inquiries/activities</p>	From May 2006	Steve Pearce	Councillor J Walker		

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	<p>2.2 How does scrutiny make itself accessible to the public?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Questionnaires to relevant parties ➢ Citizens Panel ➢ Members reflect public complaints for inquiry requests ➢ Regular slot in Borough News 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication between Council its partners and other non-executive members - better external and internal communication • Lack of facilities for public participation • Capacity and resource issues • Encouragement of public to comment on Inquiries (eg through Press Articles) 	<p>See Item 9</p>					
	<p>2.3 How does scrutiny communicate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Publish articles in newspaper ➢ Inform consultees of inquiry results ➢ Overview and Scrutiny toolkit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity issues • Better consultation with partners in inquiry/meetings timetable • Time constraints on Member participation • Members ability to attend meetings • Members training opportunities - for both Executive and Scrutiny Members • Executive Members attendance at scrutiny meetings 	<p>See Item 9</p>					
				<p>See Item 1</p>					
				<p>See Item 1</p>					

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3. Take the lead and own the scrutiny process	3.1 Does scrutiny operate with political impartiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Non political ➢ No pressure is placed on Members ➢ Consensus amongst all on issues ➢ Smaller Panels (10 Members) ➢ Collect evidence ➢ Opposition Chairs ➢ More transparent ➢ Referral of Issue from Exec for Scrutiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the understanding/more training on the scrutiny process 	<p>See Item 1 and</p> <p>10. Revise/update Overview and Scrutiny toolkit</p>	<p>10. Updated Overview and Scrutiny toolkit in line with current best practice in other local authorities</p>	December 2006	Steve Pearce	Councillor J Walker	
	3.2 Does scrutiny have ownership of its own work programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ We do have a work programme ➢ We decide Members contribution ➢ We monitor regularly the work programme ➢ Criteria for choosing Scrutiny Inquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to get the correct information • Need to examine the skills required • External organization to improve timescales 	<p>11. Public invited to submit scrutiny inquiry topics</p> <p>12. Rolling Overview and Scrutiny work programme to be produced prior to each municipal year following consultation with members/partners /public (to be based on the Corporate Strategy)</p>	<p>11. Improved public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>12. Improved/co-ordinated annual work programme</p>	From June 2006 From June 2006	Steve Pearce Donna Hall	Councillor J Walker Councillor J Walker	
	3.3 Do scrutiny members consider that they have a worthwhile and fulfilling role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ We have a greater response from the Executive ➢ Monitoring of Recommendation from Inquiries ➢ Most Members are enthusiastic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of experience • More training 	<p>-</p> <p>See Item 1</p>					

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							BY WHOM Officer	BY WHOM Member	
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	<p>3.4 Is there a current constructive working partnership with officers including support arrangements for scrutiny?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Officers attend and present reports ➢ Support from officers ➢ Toolkit ➢ Acceptance of Scrutiny Inquiry Recommendations by the Executive Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Chairing skills • Members lack of knowledge of Officers functions 	<p>See Item 8</p> <p>See Item 1</p>					
	<p>4.1 How is the scrutiny workload coordinated and integrated in corporate processes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Panels shaped around corporate priorities eg Markets inquiries ➢ Executive Cabinet has accepted majority of recommendations ➢ Financial implications now included in Scrutiny reports ➢ Corporate priorities in topic selection ➢ Reports are requested on agendas by Members ➢ Councillors can request scrutiny inquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training/ understanding of Forward Plan Scrutiny of the budget needs to be non political • early sharing of budgets • executive and scrutiny look at budget at same time • Identify resources aligned when considering rec's (where is the money coming from) • Ensure scrutiny topics are in line with the corporate priorities 	<p>See Item 1</p> <p>See Item 5</p> <p>See Item 5</p> <p>See Item 10</p> <p>See Item 10</p>					

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	<p>4.2 What evidence is there to show that scrutiny has contributed to improvement ?</p> <p>4.3 How well is information required by scrutiny managed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Results of inquiries - recs eg grass cutting, One Stop Shop, housing maintenance ➢ Executive Cabinet have accepted the majority of recommendations ➢ Have monitoring reports on inquiry rec's (every six months) ➢ Annual report on Overview and Scrutiny activities ➢ Planning/scoping and toolkit good ➢ Info received good ➢ Officer support good ➢ Do consult with partner groups ➢ Do go on site visits/consider best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up small groups to look at issues for scrutiny • Encourage the public to "call-in"/participate in scrutiny • Need to raise awareness of Scrutiny • Officer resources planned throughout the year - clear plan at start of year (impact of inquiries) • Lessons learnt at the end of Inquiries (what could we do better?) • Percentage of recommendations approved as PI (Scrutiny Performance) 	<p>13. Annual review of Overview and Scrutiny function.</p> <p>See Item 12</p> <p>See Item 10</p>	<p>13. Effective and efficient Overview and Scrutiny function</p>	<p>December 2006</p>	<p>Donna Hall</p>	<p>Councillor J Walker</p>	