

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director responsible for Democratic Services

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date:	26 May 2016
Subject:	Review of Scrutiny Working Group – Closer Working with the Executive

Summary:

This report updates the committee on progress with the Review of Scrutiny, following a decision by Council to delegate to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee the implementation of recommendations in an independent report on scrutiny by Dr Stuart Young of East Midlands Councils.

Actions Required:

The Committee is asked to note and comment on the progress being made on the Review of Scrutiny.

1. Background

- 1.1 At a meeting of Council on 18 December 2015 members considered an independent report from Dr Stuart Young, Chief Executive Officer of East Midlands Councils on his review of the scrutiny arrangements at Lincolnshire County Council.
- 1.2 The Council resolved to delegate to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee the implementation of the recommendations in the report.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 28 January 2016 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee resolved to set up a working group to investigate three areas highlighted for improvement.
 - Closer working with the Executive
 - Cultural change
 - Structural change
- 1.4 The Review of Scrutiny Working Group has now met three times to discuss the relationship between Executive and Scrutiny. As part of discussions, the Working Group is producing a scrutiny protocol. The Working Group hopes that this protocol will form the basis for improving that relationship. The draft

protocol has had input from the Working Group, from two of the Executive councillors, and is due to be considered by chief officers and the rest of the Executive shortly.

- 1.5 Visits to councils who have received awards for their scrutiny work are also being carried out by members of the Working Group. Councillors Mrs Marianne Overton MBE and Colin Mair visited Boston Borough Council on 22 April 2016. The Council had achieved an award for its work on migration and borough councillors and officers were happy to share their experiences.
- 1.6 One idea that surfaced during discussions at Boston was the holding of informal workshops/briefings prior to an item being considered by the scrutiny committee. As a result, the Value for Money Scrutiny Committee has agreed to trial this prior to its next meeting on 21 June 2016 when the Committee will be briefed by officers on the performance of the business support contract.
- 1.7 The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee continues to attend meetings of the Executive, where he is invited to comment on behalf of scrutiny before decisions are made. Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of scrutiny committees are also regular attendees at these meetings.
- 1.8 Regular meetings between chairmen of scrutiny committees and their relevant Executive Councillors are also expected to play an important part of this improvement in the relationship between Executive and Scrutiny. The Chairmen of the Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee and the Environmental Scrutiny Committee have agreed to trial this.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 The work of the Scrutiny Review Working Group continues. Key to its success is the production of a scrutiny protocol that has the support of scrutineers, Executive Councillors and senior managers. The Working Group is now starting to look at areas of improvement in relation to cultural change.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Nigel West, who can be contacted on 01522 552840 or nigel.west@lincolnshire.gov.uk .