



Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer

General Purposes Committee

Date: 8th September 2009

Subject: Vision for Scrutiny

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. In June 2009 KPMG recommended that a Vision for Scrutiny be adopted by the Council.
2. The purpose of this report is to present a draft Vision for consideration.

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a draft Vision for Scrutiny for approval by full Council.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 As part of their 2008/09 Audit and Inspection Plan, it was agreed that KPMG would carry out a review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function. The audit objective was to provide the Council with assurance around the progress made in the improvement areas identified by the Corporate Assessment.
- 2.2 KPMG reported in June 2009 and a key learning point from the review was the recommendation to develop and publish an overall vision for the Scrutiny function.
- 2.3 KPMG's rationale for this recommendation was based on their observation that there was no reference to what the Council sees as its Vision for Scrutiny. This followed their discussions with Scrutiny Board Chairs. KPMG concluded that each of the Chairs had their own personal vision for Scrutiny, including; "holding the executive to account"; "getting involved in pre-policy decisions"; and "improving services for members of the public". KPMG therefore concluded that by having an overall Vision it would serve to provide a clearer understanding of the purpose of Scrutiny and demonstrate the added value that that the function can bring.
- 2.4 In line with the agreed process for progressing KPMG's recommendations, a draft Vision has been drafted in consultation with the Scrutiny Chairs, Executive Board Members and Group Leaders. This is presented as Appendix 1. The Vision uses as its basis the 'four principles of good public scrutiny' as developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. It also draws on the values agreed by members in the 'Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Scrutiny'.

3.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 3.1 The Council's Scrutiny arrangements are one of the key parts of the Council's governance arrangements. The creation of a Vision for Scrutiny, agreed by Council, will provide a clear statement of Members expectations of Scrutiny.

4.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal or resource implications to the proposed amendments.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 The General Purposes Committee is requested to consider the draft Vision for Scrutiny and to recommend its adoption to Council.

Background Papers

'Memorandum of Understanding between Executive Board and Scrutiny'.

KPMG Review of Scrutiny – June 2009