
REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 5
DATE OF MEETING:	13 MAY 2002	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINTS:	NEIL BETTERIDGE (EXT. 5895) SALLY KNIGHT (EXT. 5728)	
SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF THE NEW POLITICAL STRUCTURES	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- provide feedback on a meeting with the County Secretary (Derbyshire County Council) about the Constitution and whether it is legally compliant
- set out a composite Action Plan for progressing the various recommendations made by the District Auditor, Members and Officers
- consider arrangements for implementing the Action Plan

2.0 Legal Compliance

- 2.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its political management arrangements and Constitution comply with the law. As reported at the last meeting, Derbyshire County Council has kindly offered to provide legal support for this work (in the absence of the Council's own Legal and Member Services Manager).
- 2.2 On 7 May 2001, Council Officers met with the County Secretary to discuss the issue of compliance, the District Auditor's report, publicity and consultation requirements and the need for further submissions to DTLR.
- 2.3 The County Secretary indicated that most of the components of the Constitution are now in place and they would appear to comply with statutory guidance. There is, however, a need to complete the Constitution (also recommended by the District Auditor.)
- 2.4 The discussion with the County Secretary also confirmed the priorities agreed by Members at the last meeting, that no further submissions are required to DTLR and that there is a legal requirement to publicise changes to the Constitution.

3.0 The Action Plan

- 3.1 A 'composite' Action Plan has now been produced based on the discussion at the last meeting of this Committee. This is attached at Annexe A.
- 3.2 As requested, the various recommendations made by the by the District Auditor, Members and Officers have been combined (where possible), and grouped under the issues identified in the District Auditor's report (*e.g. decision making*). The priorities are as agreed at the last meeting.
- 3.3 The last column headed 'responsible Officer/Member' has been completed for the first time and Member's views are requested on the appropriateness of these designations.
- 3.4 The proposed target dates for the completion of the different parts of the Action Plan are set out below.

Priority	Target Completion Date
High	September 2002
Medium	March 2003
Low	September 2003

- 3.5 It is expected that the some of the simpler additions/changes to the Constitution can be submitted to Council in July. The rest will have to be dealt with in stages through to September 2003.
- 3.6 Comments from Members on this timetable and approach would be welcome.

4.0 Implementing the Action Plan

- 4.1 The implementation of the Action Plan will require contributions from both Members and Officers. This will be necessary not only to ensure that the timetable is achieved but also to be certain that proposed changes are realistic, effective and 'owned' throughout the organisation.
- 4.2 The views of the Committee on the nature and extent of Member involvement in this process would be welcome.
- 4.3 A further practical consideration is the fact that a new Legal and Member Services Manager (who would complete most of the work) is unlikely to be in post before September. The Chief Executive is currently addressing this issue and it is anticipated that proposals for temporary Officer support will be made to Annual Council on 16 May 2002.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.