

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

online briefing service

From review to action...

Following the Council's endorsement of the O&S Coordinating Committee's scrutiny review finding in September, work has started to implement the 31 recommendations. (This new online briefing service for members is one of the measures called for by members and the first that has been put into place.) The work to implement the findings will be undertaken by the Council's Democratic Services Scrutiny Team in consultation with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the O&S Committees. Any formal recommendations will be considered by the O&SCC and the Council as necessary.

The first meeting of this informal steering group will take place on 10th December at the Council Offices, Bourne Hill. On the agenda will be: the overall progress of the existing review programme and how it may be improved in 2005; proposals for a new O&S Guide; call-in arrangements and proposals for a new systematic approach to O&S that will dovetail with the Council's existing corporate planning process.

Steve Milton in the DSU Team has been nominated by the Council to lead the O&S work within the Council and he will be working very closely with the DSU Scrutiny Review Team. Team members and roles are:

- **Arabella Davies**
Community and Housing
- **Andrew Rose**
Resources
- **Sara Draper**
Planning & Economic Development - plus Health
- **Helen Collar**
Environment & Transport

A new guide for scrutiny...

When embarking on scrutiny reviews, members and officers may get entangled in complex procedures and processes - when they really want to get at the issues. With this in mind, proposals are being drafted for the O&S Panel Chairs for the development of a simple SDC scrutiny guide. The guide aims to take each review through the scrutiny process, step by step - offering tips and tools at each stage. The loose-leaf guide will provide a set of worksheets that will capture each stage of the review process, and will build one upon the other to a final report. All scrutiny members will need to do is complete each sheet and hand them in to their scrutiny support officer, who will add them to the final report document. This will also help to track progress against review timetables. It is hoped that the new guide will be in place for the start of the next scrutiny year. The guide will be kept up-to-date and in line with latest developments in the field.



Do you know about CfPS?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has been created to promote the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government - not only to hold executives to account but also to create a constructive dialogue between the public and its elected representatives - to improve the quality of public services.

The CfPS aims to enhance public understanding of what scrutiny means, why it matters and how we can get it right. It will support effective scrutiny by bringing people together, developing networks and disseminating research to share imaginative practice across the country. The DSU Scrutiny Team will be using the CfPS as a means of bringing external validation and benchmarking into local scrutiny, as well as developing our own scrutiny skills.

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The aims of CfPS are:

- **Enable strong external challenge to the performance of public authorities and public sector organisations**
- **Ensure public services are responsive to the needs of the public**
- **Engage the public as active citizens**
- **Secure the effective promotion of community well being at the local level**

We will be highlighting the work of the CfPS in this newsletter on a regular basis. Why not check out the CfPS website at: www.cpfs.org.uk