

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING - 12 OCTOBER 2006

BEST VALUE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING AUDIT - IMPROVEMENT AGENDA: REVIEW OF POLITICAL AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

Report by Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To provide an update on the review of political and management structures and further development of scrutiny arrangements and to seek the approval of Council to establish a Member/Officer Working Group.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 24 January 2006 approved East Ayrshire Council's submission to the Best Value and Community Planning Audit Review. The Council's Improvement Plan proposed a review of its own political and management structure in the context of the 2007 Local Authority Elections (Item 2, Page 1906, 03/07). The Council's proposal was supported by the Accounts Commission in its report on East Ayrshire Council's Audit of Best Value and Community Planning, recently considered by Council at a Special Meeting on 20 September 2006 (Item 1, Page 2430, 03/07).
- 2.2** In addition, the Council and the Audit Commission also considered the need to further develop the Council's scrutiny arrangements and in light of the intrinsic role scrutiny plays within the decision making process, the review of scrutiny arrangements is being carried out along with the review of the decision making structure.

3. REVIEW

- 3.1** The initial work of the review has been involved in researching and considering other decision making structures and scrutiny arrangements. The main thrust of the review is to provide for the Community Plan thematic objectives to be linked to the decision making structure and to provide for more open and systematic scrutiny.
- 3.2** The options being developed for consideration by Council in due course are:-
- a revised version of the existing Committee decision-making structure with appropriate scrutiny arrangements;
 - a cabinet/scrutiny system; and
 - a Committee system based on Community Plan thematic objectives with related revised scrutiny arrangements.

3.3 The review will also consider the Council's Decentralisation Scheme, insofar as the Local Committee and Local Planning Committee networks are concerned and consideration will also be given to the Council's protocol documents:- Scheme of Administration and Delegation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders.

4. MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP

4.1 To assist in the review process, it is suggested that a Member/Officer Working Group be established. The role of the Group would be to:-

- act as a consultative body in respect of decision-making structure options;
- to assess the strengths and weakness of decision-making structure options; and
- to consider procedures and protocol documents associated with decision-making structure options.

4.2 At the conclusion of the review, the decision-making structure options and associated protocol documents and procedures will be submitted to the Council Meeting on 1 March 2007 for consideration and for that Council to agree for the decision-making structure options to be submitted to the Statutory Meeting of the new Council which will be held following the Elections in May 2007.

4.3 In terms of Officer representation on the Member/Officer Working Group, it is suggested that the following Officers be appointed:- Chief Executive; Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support; Head of Administrative and Legal Services; and Administration Manager. Other Officers would be invited to attend the Working Group as and when required.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There will be costs associated with the normal administrative arrangements in relation to operating a Member/Officer Working Group and these costs will be met from the Democratic Process budget.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The improvement agenda of East Ayrshire Council's Audit of Best Value and Community Planning together with the Council's strategic self assessment has identified the need to review political and management structures and further develop scrutiny arrangements.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS - NIL.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Council is requested:-

- (i) to establish a Member/Officer Working Group to assist in the review of the Council's political and management structures and scrutiny arrangements in terms of the remit as detailed in Paragraph 4.1 above;
- (ii) to appoint Elected Members to serve on the Member/Officer Working Group; and
- (iii) to otherwise, note the contents of the report.

Fiona Lees
Chief Executive

3 October 2006

BW/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS - NIL

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager on Tel No (01563) 576135.

Implementation Officer: Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager.